UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

CURSO DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE

Henri Bergson's Theory of Time and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*

Dissertação apresentada ao curso de Pós-Graduação em Inglês e Literatura Correspondente da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina como parte dos requisitos para obtenção do grau de Mestre em Letras, opção Inglês e Literatura Correspondente .

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Florianópolis 1989

Esta dissertação foi julgada adequada para obtenção do título

MESTRE EM LETRAS, opção **INGLÊS E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE**

Área de concentração : Literatura Inglesa

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AGRADECIMENTOS

Agradeço aos meus pais ;

à Prof. Dra. Bernadete Pasold ;

ao Pró-Reitor de Pós-Graduação da UFPB ,Vicente Madeira ;

à Biblioteca Municipal Mário de Andrade -SP ;

à Mª Arménia Ramalho e

a todos os professores e colegas do programa de Pós-Graduação.

Agradeço em especial ao Prof. José Blásio Baches , do Departamento de Filosofia da UFSC .

A B S T R A C T

Time plays an important role in the works of the English novelist Virginia Woolf. The present study examines the various devices the novelist uses to convey time in her narratives. This study also examines the presence of a possible affinity between Henri Bergson's theory of time and Virginia Woolf's narrative use of time . As such, this dissertation tries to tackle two specific questions. First of all, is there a real affinity between the French philosopher's idea of duration and the novelist's time structures ? Secondly, how are the Bergsonian concepts of time brought out in the narratives ?

This dissertation, aiming at answering these two basic questions, starts with an explanation of the main concepts of Bergson's philosophy. Next, each of the three novels - *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, are analysed one by one in detail in order to detect the peculiarities of each of them in their time approach .

In the conclusion of this study, possible similarities detected between the philosopher and the novelist in what concerns time treatment are pointed out.

R E S U M O

O tempo tem um papel importante nos trabalhos da romancista inglesa Virginia Woolf. O presente estudo examina os diversos recursos que a romancista usa para transmitir o tempo em suas narrativas. Este estudo também examina a presença de uma possível afinidade entre a teoria do tempo de Henri Bergson e o uso do tempo narrativo de Virginia Woolf. Como tal, esta dissertação tenta enfrentar duas questões específicas, quais sejam, (1) há uma afinidade real entre a idéia da duração do filósofo francês e as estruturas de tempo da romancista ? E (2) como os conceitos bergsonianos de tempo são apresentados nas narrativas ?

Esta dissertação, objetivando responder estas duas questões básicas, começa com uma explicação dos principais conceitos da filosofia de Bergson. Depois, cada um dos três romances - *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* (*Passeio ao Farol*) e *The Waves* (*As Ondas*), são analisados , detalhadamente, a fim de detectar as peculiaridades de cada um no que concerne à abordagem do tempo .

Na conclusão deste estudo, possíveis semelhanças detectadas entre o filósofo e a romancista no que diz respeito ao tratamento do tempo são mostradas.

C O N T E N T S

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1. Statement of problem

One of the aspects of human consciousness which most worries man is the awareness of time. Man feels the passage of time in his own experience and from this awareness arises the certainty of the inexorability of death. This is one of the reasons why the problem of time bears so powerfully on human emotion : time, little by little, threatens man's existence.

Philosophers and artists are the ones who most struggle with time. The philosophers try to say what time is and how it exists, but time exasperates them due to its evanescence as an object of thought; the artists try to convey their own experience with time through their artistic means.

This dissertation deals with the attempts of an English novelist, Virginia Woolf, to convey in narrative terms, the passage of time as she experienced it. My theoretical assumption is that Virginia Woolf, in the three novels chosen, conveys the passage of time as real duration, as pure flux. If she does so, she is conveying the essence of Henri Bergson's philosophy. My intention is to depict an affinity between the philosopher's theory of time and the novelist's use of time in her novels by an in depth discussion of the time structure in *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

These three novels were especially chosen from V.

Woolf's opus because they all treat the problem of time and also due to their use of stream-of-consciousness techniques, as well as their use of some devices which are particular to each novel; thus, the totality of these techniques achieves different temporal structures and patterns in each book. They were also chosen because they are chronologically in succession and the fact that the three novels are in a sequence may help to find some kind of evolution from one book to the other concerning time treatment.

It is necessary to say that the bibliography is divided into two parts : **Works Cited and Works Consulted.** The first part refers only to the works actually cited within the dissertation. This system was used due to the choice for direct bibliographical references without the aid of footnotes or notes at the end of the chapters. The second part of the bibliography contains all the books which were relevant and helpful in some way or another to the understanding of the aspects considered in this dissertation.

It is also important to say, beforehand, that all quotations referring to Portuguese ,Spanish or French titles were literally translated by myself into English. Concerning Bergson's books, with the exception of *Matiére et memoire*,which I read in an authorized English translation, I read his *Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* in a Spanish version and *L'Evolution Creatrice* and all his other works in Portuguese translations, since I had not enough command of French to allow me the reading of Bergson's philosophy in the original.

Another point which is important to clarify is that the review of literature includes only works directly connected with the theme of this dissertation, for it would be irrelevant to present most of the critical material about V. Woolf which were

not, in the least, connected with time problems.

2. Review of Literature

Although some critics have already recognized the presence of Bergsonian ideas in the novels of Virginia Woolf, I have not found any full-length study to support all the aspects which I intend to discuss in this dissertation, but only some articles or chapters in which specific aspects were analysed.

Floris Delattre in his book *Le Roman Psychologique de Virginia Woolf* (1932) affirms that it is the notion of "durée" that tightens Woolf's connection to Bergsonism. Delattre recognizes further that the idea of duration, in which Bergson tried to grasp, in its totality, the data of the immediate self,is at the very basis of Virginia Woolf's novels (p.134).According to Delattre, Woolf was attracted to Bergson's ideas mainly because of his central thesis - continuity in motion(p.144).

Harvena Richter shares Delattre's opinion and, in her book *Virginia Woolf : The Inward Voyage* (1970),points out that "although Mrs Woolf did not consciously follow Bergson, her moment of being, with its diversity in unity, resembles his concept of duration in which time is qualitative, nonspatial, real, vertical and always present" (p.38).

Hermione Lee is another critic who seems to agree with the former positions, although there is just one passage in *The Novels of Virginia Woolf* (1977), in which the critic echoes the idea of the time that: "It has often been noticed that Virginia Woolf's concept of inner time set against clock time is very like Henri Bergson's theory of 'la durée', which was in fashion at

the time(p.111). As one can notice from Lee's observation, the presence of duration, in Bergsonian terms, in Woolf's novels is somehow an established point among critics.

Michael Moloney, for instance, is another critic who shares this belief. In his article "The Enigma of Time : Proust, Virginia Woolf and Faulkner" (1957), he says that "the impact of Proust's time philosophy was not lost on Mrs Woolf"(p.76)and he also says that the indebtedness of Proust to Bergson is unquestionable. Therefore, he is indirectly saying that V. Woolf is also indebted to Bergson because Proust, besides being a point of reference for all other contemporary novelists concerned with time, is one of the writers who most influenced V. Woolf. But Moloney also says that "even before she read Proust her work was a research of the past"(p.76). In her diary, Virginia Woolf herself writes, in an entry for Thursday 3 August, 1922, that she is "horribly in debt for Joyce & Proust at this moment"(1981:187); in another entry for Tuesday April 8th, 1925, she talks only about Proust and his influence on her: "I wonder if this time I have achieved something ? Well, nothing compared to Proust, in whom I am embedded now.... And he will, I suppose, both influence me and make me out of temper with every sentence of my own"(1972:72).

Another critic who has helped to unveil this aspect of Woolf's novels is James Hafley. In his book *The Glass Roof* (1954), he establishes a more or less negative but extensive parallel between Bergson and V. Woolf. He thinks that what is "hopelessly contradictory and smoky (therefore, according to Bergson, true) in Bergson's philosophy is supremely consistent and translucent in Proust and Virginia Woolf"(p.43). For Hafley, Virginia Woolf's philosophical perspective, i. e., the Bergsonian perspective, was

somehow responsible for her limitations. As Bergson's theory, according to Hafley, is sometimes weak and self-contradictory so is "part of the abstract thought of Virginia Woolf which closely corresponds to Bergson's" (p.166).

Winifred Holtby reminds us, in the book *Virginia Woolf*(1932), of one aspect in which Mrs Woolf differs from Bergson: "Though she shares the preoccupation of her Bergsonian contemporaries, she approached them from a different standpoint"(p.22). Holtby means that Virginia Woolf did not share the Bergsonian revolt against reason and because of this V. Woolf examined the stream of consciousness with an instrument in which she had not lost her faith - the intellect.

It is an Indian critic, Shiv Kumar, who contributes the most to clarify the nature of the relationship between this philosopher and this novelist. His works are specifically on memory. Kumar studies this aspect in different novels and concludes that "a careful analysis of these two novels [*Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*] will reveal a very close resemblance between Virginia Woolf on the one hand and Proust or Bergson on the other, in their treatment of memory" ("Memory in V. Woolf and Bergson", 1960:314). About *To the Lighthouse* he states that Virginia Woolf, in this novel, has a Bergsonian attitude in what concerns her "frequent blending of pure memory with learnt recollections" (p.315). Shiv Kumar concludes this essay by stating the similarity between Woolf's belief in the indestructibility of the past and its power to re-emerge into consciousness with Bergson's theory of duration and memory.

Even those critics who do not mention V. Woolf's connection to Bergsonism have already realized the importance of

time and memory in her novels. A. A. Mendilow, for instance, in his book *O Tempo e o Romance*(1972), writes that Virginia Woolf is the typical representative of the twentieth century school of temporal fiction and as such she gave much attention to the treatment of the temporal aspect of theme, form and medium of the novel (p.224). Mendilow also explains that Virginia Woolf not only exemplifies the majority of the temporal techniques of her predecessors and contemporaries,but she also discusses this aspect in critical essays as well as in passages from her novels(p.225).

John Graham, in his article "Time in the Novels of Virginia Woolf" (1970), writes very concisely about the temporal aspect in Woolf's novels. He says that "in struggling to reach the goal, Mrs Woolf is constantly preoccupied with problems relating to time.... This preoccupation underlies her concern with the phenomena of memory, change and death" (p.28). Another critic, Bernard Blackstone, in his *Virginia Woolf: A Commentary*(1949), referring to *Mrs Dalloway* affirms that it is an "experiment with time" (p.71).

Leon Edel, in his *The Modern Psychological Novel*(1964), emphasizes V. Woolf's power to condense experience and to use time in her novels: "Indeed, in most of Mrs Woolf's fiction, time is reduced to a few hours, so that even in *To the Lighthouse*, where a number of years are bridged in the middle passage, 'Time Passes,' it is but to link two single days at each end of that period" (p.130). Lodwick Hartley, in his turn, writes in an article called "Of Time and Mrs Woolf"(1939) that "Time - conceived of as a more gentle, but scarcely less immutable force, is again the most important element in a novel [he is referring to *The Years*] by Mrs

Woolf. It moulds and changes life, but never violently.... Thus, paradoxically enough, a novel in which time is an extremely important element achieves a freedom from time"(p.236).

The book *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*(1954) by Robert Humphrey presents a particular interest in time problems. Novelists of the stream-of-consciousness trend (including V. Woolf), according to Humphrey, considered time of huge importance: "The other important characteristic of the movement of consciousness is its ability to move freely in time - its tendency to find its own time sense"(p.42). James Wilson in an article called "Time and Virginia Woolf"(1942) presents how the novelist changed, concerning the importance given to time, from her earlier to her later novels: "She sought to refashion it [*Jacob's Room*] into unity in *Mrs Dalloway*.... Not space now but time supplies the intensifying restriction; time and human consciousness, one day and Mrs Dalloway's mind, are the novel's dimensions" (p.270).

I think that all these critics' opinions are more than an indication that time,whether in Bergsonian terms or not, is of the utmost importance in V. Woolf's novels, and it is my belief that this aspect has not been adequately studied yet.

3. Statement of Purpose

My interest in the temporal aspect of Virginia Woolf's novels has been raised by her recurrent use of free mental association and, consequently, by the use of memory to produce time shifts. I realized that the stream-of-consciousness techniques provided her with the devices to convey the flowing of consciousness and to portray the characters' mind with its own time and space values. Thus, I perceived that Virginia Woolf's technique depicted, very successfully, the duration as flux which is one of the principles of Bergson's theory. Her novels seemed to crystalize, in narrative terms, the Bergsonian concept of time. It is this first impression about the relationship between this novelist's time structures and the philosopher's theory of real duration that I shall try to develop, and, I hope, to demonstrate.

The way I chose to demonstrate my hypothesis is the following: the chapter entitled "*Some Aspects of Bergson's Theory*" situates the problem of time in Bergson's philosophical work, clarifies the philosophical concepts to be used in the development of the dissertation and, finally, presents how the Bergsonian concepts influenced literature; the second chapter is an analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*(1925), in which I try to demonstrate that there is a strongly built time pattern conducted by Big Ben which is encompassed and dissolved by the fluid pattern of the characters' mind through, e. g., the use of memory; chapter three deals with the analysis of the three parts of *To the Lighthouse*(1927) in which I emphasize the importance of their close relationship in supporting the time structure of the novel;

in the fourth chapter I attempt to analyse how the time structure of *The Waves*(1931), with its distinction between 'interludes' and 'sections', is connected with Bergson's duration; as a conclusion the three novels are analysed together and, according to the analysis made in the previous chapters, they are graded in relation to their resemblance, in their time structure, to the Bergsonian flux.

I. SOME ASPECTS OF BERGSON'S THEORY

I.1. Brief View of Bergson's Philosophy

Bergson's philosophy, is not independent of his biography, mainly in what concerns the philosophical-scientific environment in which he lived. Against this environment, of anti-philosophical materialism in science and of anti-scientific conceptualism in philosophy, he reacted with such brightness that, according to René Verdenal in *A Filosofia de Bergson* (1974), he managed to gain eminent followers such as Jacques Maritain,Charles Peguy, Edouard Le Roy, George Sorel, Karl Barth among others (p.211).

The philosophy historian I.M.Bochenski, in *A Filosofia Contemporânea Ocidental* (1975), considering Bergson's philosophical production as a block, makes an expressive praise stating that Bergson's books had an extraordinary success not only explained by the fact that he presented an actually new philosophy, but also by the fact that he expressed it in a language of rare beauty.Bochenscki believes that for this reason the 1927-Nobel Prize in Literarture was awarded to him (p.109). It is important to remember that the Nobel Prize was awarded to him in 1927 especially for his *L'Evolution Créatrice* (1907) but that *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889) and *Matière et Mémoire : Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (1896) are also of remarkable interest for the study of literary Bergsonism.

Henri-Louis Bergson was born in Paris on October 18,

1859. His father, who was a talented musician, was descended from a rich Polish Jewish family - the sons of Berek, or Berek-son, from which the name Bergson is derived. His mother came from an English Jewish family. Bergson's upbringing and interests were typically French and his life was spent in Paris.

As a philosophy teacher Bergson began his career in various lycées outside Paris. Bergson, besides being a teacher was also a thinker, and by the middle of the 1880's he had the intuition which provided both the basis and the inspiration for his first philosophical books. This fact is very well expressed by Bergson himself in a letter to the American pragmatist William James, quoted in Enciclopaedia Britanica, vol.2 :

> I had remained up to that time wholly imbued with mechanistic theories, to which I had been led at an early date by the reading of Herbert Spencer .... It was the analysis of the notion of time, as it enters into mechanics and physics, which overturned all my ideas. I saw, to my great astonishment, that scientific time does not endure ... that positive science consists essentially in the elimination of duration. This was the point of departure of a series of reflections which brought me by gradual steps, to reject almost all of what I had hitherto accepted and to change my point of view completely.(1986:129)

This change of the Bergsonian point of view can be found in a statement of Abbagnano in *História da Filosofia*(n/d), vol.12. According to him, Bergson's opus is the greatest expression of French spiritualism, which begins with Maire de Biran and goes on with other contemporary thinkers (p.7). In his spiritual perspective, Bergson shares with William James relevant theses such as the importance of intuition. Bergson was against the materialistic view of evolution, of the theory of knowledge and of

sociology put forward by Spencer. This opposition, according to Bochenski (1975), led Bergson to fight against Spencerism (p.109).

As a result of this change Bergson elaborated a philosophy which is mainly dualistic. The world, for Bergson, is divided into two opposite portions : on the one hand life,on the other, matter. The universe, for Bergson, is the conflict of these two forces. In *A Evolução Criadora* (1979), he defines these antagonistic forces as life,the movement which climbs upward, and matter, the movement which falls downward (p.21). Life, in Bergsonian terms, is the great force, the vital impulse (*élan vital*) given once and for all from the beginning of the world. Life is always meeting the resistance of matter, struggling to break a way through matter, and learning to use matter by means of organization.

Bergson believes that evolution is as truly creative as the work of art, for it is completely unpredictable. In *A Evolução Criadora*, Bergson presents a scheme of development of life on earth. The first division of life was into the categories of plants and animals; the difference between these two branches was that plants stored energy in a reservoir and animals used energy for movements. Later on, there was a subdivision among animals, and instinct and intellect became somehow separated. Bertrand Russell, in *A History of Western Philosophy*(1977), explaining this division between intellect and instinct in Bergsonian philosophy, jokes: "they are never wholly without each other, but in the main intellect is the misfortune of man, while instinct is seen at its best in ants, bees and in Bergson"(p.758). Russell tries to emphasize the importance of instinct in Bergson's system by comparing him to insects widely known by their instinctive

behaviour.

No wonder Russell is ironical about Bergson. His conceptual intellectualism overestimated intelligence against intuition, and much more against instinct. Bergson, however, connects intelligence and intuition, viewing them as intercomplementary functions when he defines human intuition as instinct made conscious through intelligence (I shall explain the concept of intuition later on.) Furthermore, Russell belongs to his own time. In the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, the philosophical thought was under the influence of the positivist sciences. Only the empirically and directly observable data could be considered scientific. Science, in this period, was being conducted by a strong determinism and there was no place for any kind of free will.

The psychic phenomena also received this objective treatment and they were submitted to measure. A French surgeon called Piere Paul Broca discovered an articulate centre in the brain, and a German psychologist called Gustav Theodor Fechner wrote a book (*Elements of Psychophysics*,1860) putting forward the quantification of the phychological phenomena. J. Pessanha, in the introduction to *Os Pensadores*(1979:IX), puts this question in a clearer way .He says that the advances in psychophysics seemed to highlight the subjective world in a scientific way and materialism seemed to have overcome metaphysical questions. The reactions against this scientism were rather irrational and they argued that psychology would not be turned into a natural science.

In this environment of ideas Bergson's philosophy

develops. His great originality, according to Pessanha, lies in the fact that he re-established the debate with materialists and determinists, taking into account the notions which seemed to strengthen the position supported by them. These notions were: measure in psychology, and the overemphasis upon the cerebral instead of upon the mental and the spiritual(1979:IX). By presenting the determinists' notions Bergson was able to criticize them better and to propose a new path to be trodden in that almost completely positivist world according to which only through the methods of positive experience one could verify that something was real; conceptualization and philosophical reasoning had not the power to state the veracity of anything (Cupani, 1985:11 ff).

Bergson, moreover, made an incursion in the field of the theory of knowledge searching for concept formation processes. The intellect, elaborating concepts and working analytically, spatializes and fixes reality which is always becoming, according to Bergson. He considers this kind of intellectual activity as typical of the 'spatial ego'. As I mentioned before, Bergson's philosophy is very much based on dichotomies and one of them is the contrast between the 'spatial' and the 'fundamental' ego (see Bergson, 1944:213-39). The spatial ego is automatized, pragmatic, spatialized and attached to the problems of surviving and to social life, while the fundamental ego is pure dynamism which grows incessantly. The latter, according to Bergson, constitutes the true personality of the individual.

With the opposition between spatial and fundamental ego, qualifying the latter as pure dynamism, Bergson followed a peculiar way in the psychology of personality, which is in agreement with his *élan vital* and with his conceptions of memory

and conscience.

This contrast between the spatial ego and the fundamental ego allows Bergson to put the question of free will in a completely different way. The problem of free will generated opposed positions, among Bergson's contemporaries, which varied from the absolute determinism - in which every human acting is rigorously caused, to the absolute indeterminism - in which the free acting is extraneous to and superior to any causality. According to the scientific psychology, one can admit something in-between these two extremes: free acting is not determined by a cause, but it belongs to a frame of motivations. Human beings with their global personality choose the one which is more motivating without, however, being causally determined to this choice. The Bergsonian concept of free will resembles this in-between solution. For Bergson, free will resides not in the spatial ego but in the fundamental ego. However, he acknowledges that it is not common to find people who experience real freedom. This freedom , Bergson believes,can be found in the creative action of artists, saints and mystics who break established conceptions and behaviours to create an open horizon based on the living experience of the fundamental ego.

Bergson was convinced that he had refuted the argument for determinism, which advocated the impossibility of free will, in his first book. He had not attempted, however, to explain how mind and body are related. The results of this research were published in 1896 in his *Matter and Memory*(1919 edition used.) The approach he took in this book is typical of his philosophical method. Bergson did not proceed by general speculation and was not concerned with elaborating a great speculative system. He began

with a specific problem - aphasia, which he analysed first by determining the empirical facts that were known about the problem according to the most up-to-date scientific opinions. Thus, he devoted five years to the study of all the literature available on memory and he paid special attention to the psychological phenomenon of aphasia, or loss of the ability to use language. According to the theory of psychophysiological parallelism, a lesion in the brain should also affect the basis of a psychological power. Bergson argued that the occurence of aphasia showed that this is not the case. The person affected by aphasia understands what others say, knows what he himself wants to say, suffers no paralysis of the speech organ, and yet is unable to speak. It is, then, not memory that is lost but, rather, the bodily mechanism needed to express it. From this observation Bergson arrived at the conclusion that memory, and also mind, is independent of the body but makes use of the body to carry out its own purposes.

I.2. Bergsonian Concepts of Literary Interest

The brief view of Bergson's philosophy presented in the previous section has shown that his conceptions, far from being mental blocks isolated and dispersed, are all inserted in a systemic whole. This evidence has led F. Thonnard, in his *Compêndio de História da Filosofia*(1968), to state that Bergon's is the last great system of modern philosophy (p.916). Therefore, only for didactic purposes can one speak of Bergson's concepts in isolation. Concepts such as consciousness, memory, intuition and time shall be constantly referred to one another and connected to the general view of Bergson's philosophy.

I.2.a. Consciousness

Abbagnano, taking consciousness as the prominent point in Bergson's philosophy, believes that it is the fundamental theme of the Bergsonian philosophy (n/d:7). In fact, Bergson's study shows us that consciousness is implicit in other thematic sub-unities: memory is placed as presupposition of consciousness; intuition is captured by consciousness; Bergsonian time flows in the slope of consciousness.

Although the lexicographers had written long entries to define consciousness in all its historical meanings, Bergson hesitated in defining it, for he had been afraid that his definition would be less clear than consciousness itself.

At first, Bergson linked consciousness to spirit: " Quem

diz espírito diz, antes de tudo, consciência" (Bergson, 1974a:77). Bergson leaves in obscurity the relationship between consciousness and soul, and thus, the very nature of spirit. As a next step he states that "o espírito humano é a própria consciência"(1974b:102). In another step, he declares that" a consciência é ação que incessantemente se cria" (1974a:83), which leads him to infer that spirit itself, identified before with consciousness, can also be categorized as *action*. Moreover, he talks about "uma imensa corrente de consciência" (1974a:84). In a similar way, he refers to spirit as "being in perception already memory, and declaring itself more and more as a prolonging of the past into the present, a *progress*, a true evolution"(1919:295); this characterizes the spirit as something fluid just as perception and memory are also fluid. The spirit is not, according to Bergson, a steady substantial substratum of action, perception, memory and consciousness as it was proclaimed by traditional philosophers.

Bergson, likewise, associates consciousness to the function of choosing among alternatives, called free will :" Quais são,por outro lado, os momentos em que nossa consciência atinge maior vivacidade ? Não são os momentos de crise interior ,em que hesitamos entre duas ou várias opções,quando sentimos que nosso futuro será o que dele tivermos feito? He completes his thought by suggesting to equal free will and creation : "As variações de intensidade de nossa consciência parecem,corresponder à quantidade mais ou menos considerável de escolha ou, se se quiser,de criação, que distribuímos sobre nossa conduta"(1974a:80).

About the theme of consciousness one can also find the complex problem concerning the relation between the data of the

consciousness and the extra-conscious reality, as well as the role of language in the expression of this reality. Already in his first book, Bergson demonstrates that if one disentangles the data of our consciousness of our inner experience from all structure through which one expresses them (in common or in scientific language), these data will appear as what they really are while immediate data, that is, as pure quality not as quantity, as progress in heterogeneity and as continuous change not as juxtaposition of homogeneity or quantitative unities. For Bergson, the difficulty to apprehend the inner consciousness while immediate data, and while pure changing quality resides in the nature of intelligence. As has already been presented in this chapter, the intellect, trying to understand and to explain the states of consciousness, tends to spatialize what is pure duration, or, in other words, what is pure qualitative flux. Language itself, by naming the states of consciousness allows them to be figured out as separate and to be represented as if in a spatial succession.

I.2.b. Memory

The connection Bergson made between consciousness and memory is extremely important. Without giving a definition to consciousness which would be less clear than consciousness itself, Bergson characterizes it by its more apparent trait. For him , consciousness means memory : "A memória pode faltar amplitude; ela pode abarcar apenas uma parte ínfima do passado, ela pode reter apenas o que acaba de acontecer; mas a memória existe, ou então não existe consciência. Uma consciência que não conservasse nada do

seu passado, que se esquecesse sem cessar de si própria, pereceria e renasceria a cada instante;como definir de outra forma a inconsciência?"(1974a:77).

Bergson explained memory and all the complex problems concerning it in *Matter and Memory* (1919). The importance of memory in Bergson's theory lies on the fact that it is above all in memory that duration (this term shall be better explained later on) exhibits itself, for in memory the past survives in the present. Memory, Bergson believes, is just the intersection of mind and matter .

There are, according to Bergson, two radically different things, both of which are commonly called memory. The distinction between these two memories is very much emphasized in *Matter and Memory*: "The past survives under two distinct forms: first, in motor mechanisms; secondly, in independent recollections" (1979:87). For instance, a person is said to remember a poem if he has acquired a certain habit which enables him to repeat the poem without any recollection of the occasion when he first read it. Therefore, the type of memory in which there is no consciousness of past events involved is called by Bergson as "habit interpreted by memory rather than memory itself"(1919:95); and the type of memory in which there is recollection of the occasion when the person first read the poem, unique and with a date, is called by Bergson as "memory 'par excellence'"(1919:95). Thus, in real memory there can be no question of habit, because a person can only live an experience once and the event has to make its impression on the person's mind immediately. Bergson suggests that everything that has happened to us is stored in our consciousness, but as a rule only what is useful comes to the surface.

Memory, in Bergsonian philosophy, is not an emanation from matter: "Memory must be, in principle, a power absolutely independent of matter. If, then, spirit is reality, it is here, in the phenomenon of memory, that we come into touch with it experimentally"(1919:81).

The theme of memory is also linked to the unconscious. The action of the unconscious is represented by Bergson through the image of an upside-down cone(1919:196). The base of the cone (the unconscious) would always grow through the acquisition of new experiences. The summit of the cone would stand for the present moment when there is the insertion of psychism in life. Inside the cone the psychic elements present a two-way movement. From the summit to the base and from the base to the summit. The first movement would stand for the present experiences going to the unconscious, and the second would stand for the unconscious emerging and acting on the conscious level. The permanent growth of the cone means that each person carries with himself all his past. Thus, Bergson demonstrates that the real problem about memory is not that it keeps remembrances but that it forgets an entire bulk of things stored on the unconscious. Bergson explains that this happens because the brain, which is an organ related to life,selects the remembrances and hides those which are not useful for the moment. The brain, an organ of integration to practical life, is, thus, an organ of forgetfulness. When the attention to life is relaxed,as in sleep, the unconscious can emerge and cause the dreams to happen.

I.2.c. Intuition

With the emphasis given to intuition, Bergsonian philosophy can be aligned with philosophies called non-rationalist or anti-intellectualist. In general terms, intuition is an *immediate knowledge, without interference of ratiocination.* Philosophical romanticism emphasized intuition as an original and creative feeling - *original*, because the feeling of intuition precedes and even escapes the interference of reason; *creative*, because philosophical romanticism interpreted intuition pantheistically, as coming from an infinite consciousness, understood as a force which is all and which accomplishes all in the world. For this reason it was natural that the passage from philosophical romanticism to artistic romanticism, which occurred, above all, in terms of literary creation, excited the movement *Sturm und Drang* (Tempest and Impetus) with its exaltation of the infinite.

Bergson, contemporary of the decline of the romantic emphasis, did not repudiate intuition but, much to the contrary, heightened it to the place of reality of philosophy itself (see D. Martins, 1957, chapter II). Bergson does not dissociate intuition from the other primary forms of knowledge, such as instinct, though he makes a distinction between instinct and intuition, for the latter being a kind of instinct which has already been integrated to intellect.

With this distinction between instinct and intellect in mind, Bergson concludes that intuition is instinct at its best. In *Introdução à Metafísica* (1974c) he defines it : " Chamamos aqui intuição a simpatia pela qual nos transportamos para o interior do objeto para coincidir com o que ele tem de único e, conseqüentemente, de inexprimível"(p.20). Intellect or

intelligence can only have a clear idea of what is discontinuous and immobile. The intellect, in other words, separates in space and fixes in time. Bergson believes that intellect is not made to acknowledge evolution, but to represent becoming as a series of states. Summing up, intellect, in Bergsonian terms, is characterized by a natural inability to understand life.

As intellect is connected with space, so is instinct or intuition with time. Bergson's philosophy is very peculiar due to the fact that it regards time and space as radically different,as shall be fully explained later in the section devoted to the Bergsonian concept of time/duration.

Abbagnano transposes to the artistic field the Bergsonian idea that intuition is an instinct which has become conscious of itself. He believes that intuition, thus conceived, can be proved by the existence, in man, of aesthetic intuition which gives room for art. He observes, interpreting Bergson , that the aesthetic intuition makes man grasp the individuality of things which escapes the ordinary perception. Man is inclined to retain from the objects just the useful impressions(n/d:24). He goes on saying that the demands of action oblige man to interpret the labels imposed upon things by means of language, and the artist is the one characterized by the capacity of listening and thinking without referring himself to the necessities of action (n/d:25).

I.2.d. Time

Real Duration is an expression crystalized by Bergson to replace the traditional term *time*. With the doctrine of real

duration Bergson objectified a spiritualistic evolutionism,against the materialistic evolution conceived by Spencer.

One will immediately see that the study of real duration in Bergson involves his conceptions of consciousness, memory and intuition, which have been studied in previous sections: it involves consciousness , whose states have already been incorporated to new states in a continuous adding flow which identifies itself with the flow of spiritual evolution itself; it involves memory, which keeps the totality of the consciousness states and from this total conservation results an absolutely new conscious state, in a continuous flow of adding states and of new states which result from them; it also involves intuition, because the intellectual perception of real duration is immediate, without the interference of ratiocination based on spatial measures.

The study of the Bergsonian *real duration* ,is part of a typically human capacity because one of the aspects of human consciousness is the awareness of time. Human beings, unlike other living creatures, feel the passage of time in their personal experience and observe it in their environment. From this awareness of the passage of time arises the certainty of the irreversibility and inexorability of death. Unlike other creatures, human beings know that their lives may be interrupted at any moment by sudden death or, if they live longer, they will surely cease by decay. This is one of the reasons why the problem of time bears so powerfully on human emotions. This worry about time is particularly true of the twentieth century because never before had the feelings towards time changed so radically and gained so much importance.

Time is among the main metaphysical problems that have

been worrying mankind throughout the ages. Time appears to be specially puzzling because it seems to flow or pass, or else, people seem to advance through it. However, the passage or advance of time seems to be unintelligible. Struggling to say what time is and how it exists, philosophers are exasperated by its evanescence as an object of thought. Influenced by such difficulties philosophers have elaborated different systems about the problem of time. With this diversity in mind, the main trends which have influenced ancient and modern philosophers concerning the problem of time are presented.

According to Abbagnano, in his *Dicionário de Filosofia* (1982:908), one can distinguish three basic conceptions of time in Western philosophy. The first considers time as the measure of movement; the second considers time as structure of probabilities; and the third considers time as intuited movement.

To the first conception one can relate Aristotle's idea of time and, more recently, the idea of scientific time.

To illustrate this first conception I have selected some passages from Aristotle. For him, time is difficult to consider because it is not itself a movement and, yet "neither does time exist without change.... Time is neither movement nor independent of movement" (*Physics*, IV, II, 281b). Aristotle believes that time is a continuous quantity and he also thinks that the nature of a continuous whole is to be divisible. After an intricate questioning about the nature of time Aristotle arrives at a definition which seems to be the most perfect expression of this first conception of time. He states in his *Physics* that "time is just this - number of motion in respect of 'before' and 'after'. Hence time is movement, but only movement in so far as it admits

enumeration"(IV,II,219b).

The Aristotelic-Thomist philosopher Régis Jolivet in his *Traité de Philosophie* (1949:343), seeking to interpret this definition, correctly explains that the terms 'before' and 'after' imply succession in time. This succession happens according to the quantity of the parts of movement, since movement is the passage from one point to another in space .Time, then, is the quantification of the parts of movement. In modern times this first conception can be related to those thinkers who consider time as a mathematical magnitude or as a physical dimension. The best representative of this scientific conception is Albert Einstein with his "four-dimensional space-time continuum" in which time is only one dimension among others.

The second conception, derived from existentialism, brings some conceptual innovation in the analysis of time because it introduces the connection of time with probability.

This conception of time is illustrated here by Martin Heidegger in his *Sein und Zeit* (1927). The first characteristic of this conception is the importance given to the future in the interpretation of time. Heidegger states that two events which are contemporaneous in a given system of reference might not be so in another system. Thus, time is not a necessary order but a possibility among many orders. The importance of the future in his interpretation of time opens the possibility for not hiding other determinations of time in the present and for spreading these determinations in their specific nature, i.e., future as future (not as the "present of things future"), and past as past.

The Heideggerian concept of time is inserted in the fundamental thesis of existentialism, according to which the real

and individualizing existence precedes logically and in terms of value the ideal and generalized essence. Before existence, before the 'being-here' human beings are 'condemned to be free'(Sartre), they are responsible for the risks of their existential options, which are done within a large range of probabilities given to them in peculiar circumstances, as a unique and non-repetitive individual.

Finally, the third conception presents the identification of time with the idea of consciousness. This conception shall be represented here by Plotinus and St. Augustine. According to Plotinus, time does not exist outside the soul. In his *Third Ennead* he inquires: "Would it,then, be sound to define Time as the Life of the Soul in movement as it passes from one stage of act or experience to another?"(VII,II,8). Plotinus' belief in the tight connection between time and soul is shared by St. Augustine, to whom we are indebted for the excellent expression and for the best diffusion of this third conception in the Western philosophy. Time is identified, by St. Augustine, with the soul's life which extends itself toward the past and the future. The essential theorem for this doctrine is written in his *Confessions:* "There be three times: a present of things past, memory; a present of things present, sight; and a present of things future, expectation"(XI,20,1).

St. Augustine's anti-Aristotelic conception expressed in the following quotation reveals that his philosophy follows the Platonic line, accustomed to the intuition of eternal 'ideas': "It is in thee, my mind, that I measure times. Interrupt me not, that is, interrupt not thyself with the tumults of thy impressions. In thee I measure times; the impression which things as they pass by

cause in thee, remains even when they are gone"(Confessions,XI, XXVII, 36).

In modern philosophy, it is Henri Bergson who represents this conception of time. He holds that the flow of time is an important metaphysical fact and that this flow can only be grasped by nonrational intuition.

As one could observe, the first and the third conceptions, although contrary in terms of motion, are based on the importance of the present. In the first case, time as the order of movement is the wholeness which is all present because each order needs a simultaneity of its parts and it is from the mutual adaptation of these parts that we have the order (see Abbagnano, p.911). The conception of time as intuited 'becoming' is just the interpretation of time as having the present in mind because the intuition of the 'becoming' is always a present moment. Heidegger, with his interpretation of time as probability or projection, is contrary to the first two conceptions.

As it has already been indicated intuition is connected to time, whereas the intellect is related cognitively to space. One should, however, consider that space, associated to matter, arises from the separation of the flux. Time on the other hand, is associated with life and mind. Bergson says in *A Evolução Criadora* that "onde quer que algum coisa viva haverá ,aberto em alguma parte, um registro onde o tempo se inscreve " (p.25). The time which Bergson is talking about, however, is not at all the mathematical time. For Bergson, this kind of time is but a form of space. The time which is of the essence of life is what he calls **durée** (duration).

Bergson began to develop this conception of duration in

his first book *Ensayo sobre los datos inmediatos de la conciencia (Time and Free Will)* in 1889. In this book he made a very strong criticism against the spatialization of the Psyche, the juxtaposition, the quantity and the determinism with which naturalists considered the main elements of reality.

In his first attempt to establish the notion of duration Bergson proceeded by analysing the awareness that man has of his inner self to show that psychological facts are qualitatively different from each other, charging psychologists in particular with falsifying the facts by trying to quantify or number them. Fechner's law, for instance, claiming to establish a calculable relation between the intensity of the stimulus and that of the corresponding sensation, was especially criticized. Bergson managed, in his book, to clear away the confusions made between duration and extension, succession and simultaneity, and quality and quantity.

The concept of duration is fundamental for Bergson's philosophy. It is, however, a very difficult one. Russel wrote in his chapter on Bergson: " I did not fully understand it myself, and therefore I cannot hope to explain it with all the lucidity which it doubtless deserves" (1979:759).

The philosophy of life Bergson subscribes to tries to put in evidence aspects such as irreversibility, relativity and unity as characteristic of the idea of duration. To say that life lasts means that life is in a perpetual flux where nothing is lost, but everything gets larger and larger. Thus, every becoming is co-determined and penetrated by what there is, and time which flows continuously is unitary at every moment.

For Bergson, scientific time is spatialized time, i.e.,

it is reduced to the succession of identical moments. Duration, on the contrary, is given by the consciousness dispossessed of any intellectual or symbolic superstructure; it is considered in its original fluidity. In this fluidity there are no relatively uniform states of consciousness which follow each other as the moments in the spatialized time of science. In duration there is only one fluid stream in which there is no clear divisions or separation and in which everything is kept at the same time. "La duración pura," Bergson writes in his first book, "es la forma que toma la sucesión de nuestros estados de conciencia cuando nuestro yo se abandona al viver, cuando se abstiene de establecer una separación entre el estado presente y los estados anteriores" (1944:184). Duration makes the past and the present into one organic whole in which there is mutual penetration and succession without distinction.

Bergson insists on the necessity of considering this lived time or duration of consciousness as a fluid stream, in which it is impossible to distinguish states from one another, because "a duração é o progresso continuo do passado que rói o futuro e infla ao avançar"(Bergson, 1979:16). Time as duration, according to Bergson, has two essential characteristics. The first one is the absolute novelty of each moment which conveys the continuous process of creation; the second is the storage of the past in its integrity as if it were a snowball which grows more and more as far as it grows toward the future.

I.3. Bergson's Influence on Literature

Moloney (1957) says that "any discussion of time in

modern fiction,..., must begin with Henry Bergson who, in the years immediately after the first world war, launched his eloquent attack on entrenched scientism in an effort to effect a synthesis of the truly scientific and spiritual. At the heart of Bergson's labours was the desire to provide a demonstration of the freedom of human will which for him was linked inextricably with the problem of time" (pp 72-3).

Leon Edel (1964) also believes that one must consider Bergson, in his influence on Proust, and William James, in his account of thought-experience, "as the creators of the intellectual atmosphere in which the novel of subjectivity came into being" (p.28). Leon Edel also remarks, very wisely, that "as often has been the case, changes in the philosophical thought heralded technical innovations in arts" (p.28). This relationship between philosophy and the arts is particularly true in what concerns literature. Bergson himself expresses, in his first book, this tight connection when he describes what a novelist's role should be:

> Si entre tanto algún novelista atrevido,desgarrando la tela hábilmente tejida de nuestro yo convencional, nos muestra bajo esta lógica aparente un absurdo fundamental,bajo esta yuxtaposición de estados simles una penetración infinita de mil impresiones diversas que ya han cesado de ser en el en momento que se las nombra,le alabamos por haber-mos conocido mejor de lo que nos conocemos a nos-otros mismos....[El novelista] nos ha invitado a la reflexión poniendo en la expresión exterior algo de esta contradicción, de esta penetración mutua, que constituye la esencia misma de los elementos expresados. Estimulados por él, hemos separado por un instante el velo que interponemos entre nuestra conciencia y nosotros. Nos ha puesto en presencia de nosotros mismos". (1944:208)

This passage in Bergson's book is almost an exertion to

the following generation of novelists of the beginning of this century - the stream-of-consciousness writers. These novelists owe as much to Bergson as, for instance, to Freud. The old patterns of style, of structure, of theme are all deformed by the coming up of this new attitude toward reality, and the new patterns are concretized by the theory of the flow, by the 'duree' and by the relationship between language and reality. Novelists as Virginia Woolf try to give up the intention to reproduce external reality and, instead of this, look for techniques which should evoke, in the best possible manner, the irrational feeling of this reality. Virginia Woolf adopts the perceptive view of life in terms of flow. She explores many linguistic possibilities in order to surmount the barrier built by, among other things, the discontinuity of thought, and she attempts to create through language the illusion of fluidity. She tries, through conjured-up images which hypnotize the reader and put him out of formal logic channels, "to induce inside the reader the recreation, through intuition, of the original flow of sensations and perceptions which flood our minds incessantly" (Mendilow, 1972:171).

At this point new possibilities were open for the novel. The theory of duration, developed by Bergson, contributed a great deal to lead the novelist into a new conception of plot and structure. This new conception suggested the narrowing of plot, or rather, of fictional time. "The whole life in a day, the whole life in a moment, it is the aim of these novelists"(1972:167), writes Mendilow about the novelists of the stream of consciousness. Plot gives room for characters and chronological time becomes almost irrelevant. The writers are interested, now in presenting the thoughts as they pass through the character's mind

and in catching the present moment. "It was no accident that Joyce sought to record a single day in *Ulysses* and that throughout Virginia Woolf there is a preoccupation with 'the moment'" (1964:29), explains Leon Edel.

It is important to notice that Virginia Woolf is not reported to have got acquainted with Bergson's philosophy directly, but she seems to have arrived at his theory through other writers. About this question of direct or indirect influence James Hafley's opinion is a very satisfatory one: "If she did not read Bergson himself [as Leonard Woolf told Hafley in a letter], she certainly read Proust; and Bergson's ideas were so popular to be everywhere around her at second and third hand"(1954:174). Josephine O'Brian Schaefer, in a book called *The Three-Fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virgina Woolf* (1965:27), believes that there is a Bergsonian influence on Mrs Woolf's use of memory and that although there is no reference to this influence in the novelist's *Diary*, Mrs Woolf must have had acquaintance with Bergson, at least, through Karin Stephen's book on the French philosopher, for her sister-in-law published a book, in 1922, called *The Misuse of Mind - A Study of Bergson's Attack on Intellectualism* which was praised by the philosopher himself at the time.

Carl Woodring, in his article "Virginia Woolf"(1966), also contributes to clarify this aspect when he quotes an important declaration given by Mrs Woolf herself about influences on her work : "In a preface to the Modern Library edition ... she meant that she was not explicating or illustrating Bergson's élan vital, Freud's death-wish or anybody's theory of relativity. But one conviction fairly constant in her work, inevitably, underlies

a novel with the form this novel [*The Waves*] achieved: all of us are part of one fluid life and therefore of one another"(p.20). I share Woodring's opinion and I would like to emphasize that I am not interested in demonstrating whether the presence of Bergsonian ideas in Mrs Woolf's works comes from a direct or indirect influence. I assume that Mrs Woolf's novels are in tune with some of Bergson's concepts and I intend to reveal the presence or not of an affinity between the philosopher's theory of time and Mrs Woolf's use of time in her novels through an analysis of three of her books -*Mrs Dalloway* , *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

II.1 Introduction

The relationship between the different temporal values of the reader, of the author and of the character is of a very complex nature. This complexity produces a delicately balanced structure. A. Mendilow in his book *O Tempo e o Romance* (1972) classifies the temporal values in the following way: time by the clock or conceptual time; chronological time of the reading; chronological time of the writing; pseudo-chronological time of the novel or fictional time; psychological time of the reading; psychological time of the writing; and psychological time of the characters. From this wide range of temporal aspects I am mainly interested in the fictional time and in the psychological time of the characters,because these two aspects are the most recurrent ones in Virginia Woolf's novels.

The fictional time implies a passage of time during which things remain as they were or change through some kind of happening. The fictional time can last centuries or a day, or less than that. When fictional time encompasses a very short period, say some hours, one usually finds two levels of time: the one which encompasses everything happening within the short temporal limit of the novel and the other one which encompasses things happening outside this limit. The previous or future life of the characters, then, is introduced in this short period through some technical devices such as flash-backs or flash-forwards, among others.

The psychological time of the characters varies

according to the circumstances in the novel. This type of time is well described in *Orlando: A Biography* (1963) when the narrator explains that "an hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length, on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the timepiece of the mind by one second" (p.69). The more the reader can infer how the characters feel time passing, the better. Mendilow believes that a good writer lets the reader follow the stream of thought of the characters as well as their sensitive impressions (1972 : 80).

In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1984)[1] , one can observe a discrepancy between the fictional time and the psychological time of the characters. This discrepancy, however, is not a flaw in the novel but, much on the contrary, it is one of the most important devices Virginia Woolf uses to establish the book structure. This contrast is marked by the recurrent strokes of Big Ben, representing fictional time, and by the stream-of-consciousness techniques, representing the characters' psychological time.

The seemingly loose structure of the novel is supported by a very rigid pattern which one tends not to notice at first, for it is, perhaps, a mere device to convey, in an intelligible way, the illusion of duration in Bergsonian terms.

Leon Edel, in his *Modern Psychological Novel* (1964), makes an interesting comment about the sharp contrast upon which the stream-of-consciousness writers' novels are based:

1 The year refers to edition used. From now on, in this chapter, I shall only refer to page numbers concerning *Mrs Dalloway*.

> The reader reads the thought and senses at whatever moment they are thought or sensed. This gives the stream of consciousness novel a sense of immediacy. Time in these novels is psychological since they are concerned (as Auerbach puts it) with a 'sharp contrast between the brief span of time occupied by the exterior event and a dreamlike wealth of a process of consciousness which traverses a whole subjective universe.' Mechanical time is present, as it is in our daily lives, with every ticking watch and every chiming clock. But there is also inner time which makes no stock of clock time.(pp200-1)

The contrast of which Edel-Auerbach talk about is exactly the one I intend to show in the second section of this chapter, and which I call 'the clock paradox'. In *Mrs Dalloway* the chimings of Big Ben are representative of conventional time, i.e., the time according to which we go to concerts or take a bus. However, the chimings are also reminders of the incessant, unmeasurable flow of life of a consciousness that, as Edel says, "in reality lives only a momentary present, an endless past"(1964:101).

In other words, the contrast one finds in *Mrs Dalloway* is between the chronological time and real duration; or rather, as Bergson puts it, it is the contrast between the scientific time which is a synonym for spatialized time because it is reduced to the succession of identical moments, and real duration considered in its original fluidity in which there are no equal moments.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf manages to produce a solid illusion of the looseness of existence. She reproduces in her narrative the Bergsonian concept of real duration in which life is a fluid stream. This effect is achieved by a strong temporal pattern which is constantly absorbed by different images of fluidity and by the character's inner duration.

II.2. The Clock Paradox

To begin the analysis of the clock pattern I present a chart in which one will find information about the hour, the situation during which the clock strikes and also the page reference. The function of the chart is to enable the reader to have, at one sight, the compressed fictional time of the novel.

Hour	Situation	Page
9:00 a.m.	Clarissa Dalloway is going out to buy flowers. She is about to cross the street in front of her house.	p. 6
11:00 a.m.	Clarissa is at the flower shop and the Warren Smiths are in Regent's Park while an aeroplane is advertising.	p. 20
11:30 a.m.	Clarissa is talking to Peter Walsh in her drawingroom when Elisabeth Dalloway, her daughter, comes in.	p. 44
11:45 a.m.	The Warren Smiths are still in the Park. Septimus Smith 'sees' his dead friend Evans while Peter Walsh observes the couple.	p. 64
12:00 a.m.	Clarissa is alone in her bedroom while the Warren Smiths walk down Harley Street.	p. 84
1:30 p.m.	The Smiths are going for an appointment with Doctor Bradshaw.	p. 91
3:00 p.m.	Clarissa is alone in her drawing-room while Richard Dalloway is about to open the door to give her flowers	p. 104
3:30 p.m.	Clarissa is looking at the lady opposite her house.	p. 118
5:00 a.m.	Clarissa is again looking at the lady opposite and thinking about Septimus' death.	p. 165

It is important to notice that it is not Big Ben which strikes the nine times shown in the above chart. There is one time in which it is explicitly said that it is not Big Ben but

there are other three times in which there is no specification of the clock, so, it could be Big Ben as well. The other five times the clock appears Big Ben is clearly named.

Another point to be made is that most of the times the clock strikes the character who is present, and usually alone, is Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-aged, upper-class Londoner .

Another information to be added to the fictional time chart is that the novel takes place on a day in June around 1919. All these details, of course, are given by installments through Clarissa's thought.

After these points I shall analyse each passage in which the fictional time is given by the clock. This discussion shall be conducted by the evidences of temporal opposition which I shall try to pinpoint in the different passages.

The first time a clock strikes in *Mrs. Dalloway* the hour is not explicitly given but one infers it is around nine in the morning. The situation has been presented in the previous chart. Here follows the quotation:

> For having lived in Westmister - how many years now? Over twenty - one feels even in the midst of traffic, or walking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. (p. 6)

This first appearance of Big Ben is one of the most impressive in the book. Clarissa tries to describe the intuition she has before the clock strikes. She knows the clock is about to strike as if she had a piece of the clock mechanism inside her own head. She feels the proximity of the hour as if it had the power

to 'pause' the flux of her life. There is a 'suspense' before Big Ben strikes which is finally broken by a 'There! Out it boomed.' The description of the hour is set by opposition. First it is 'musical', then it is 'irrevocable'. The solemnity which Clarissa feels before the hour strikes is a reflection of the irrevocability of time. The clock punctuates the unmarked flux of life. It warns man against the one-way direction of chronological time. It reminds man there is no coming back.

The last sentence of this passage presents a very important motif - 'the leaden circles dissolved in the air.' Again an opposition serves to show how the irrevocable hour is transformed in 'leaden circles' dissolving in the air, or, how it dissolves into the flux of life. For after the hour strikes it is forgotten. The incessant flux of life engulfs the strokes of Big Ben.

The second passage of clock time presents some similar points to the first one:

> All down the Mall people were standing and looking up into the sky. As they looked the whole world became perfectly silent, and a flight of gulls crossed the sky, first one gull leading, then another, and in this extraordinary silence and peace, in this pallor, in this purity, bells struck eleven times, the sound fading up there among the gulls.(p.20)

One can notice the atmosphere of serenity which precedes the hour and that in some way is very similar to the 'pause' or 'suspense' in the first passage. After the bells strike, the sound 'fades up' as it 'dissolves in the air' in the first quotation. The clock unifies the 'people' who have, each of them, a time of their own; and once more the flux of life, 'perfectly silent',

encompasses the hour. Here, V. Woolf introduces an important symbol: the seagulls. The hour is dissolving 'among the gulls', or else, among the flight of the seagulls which is also a symbol of the flux of life,of natural life.

In a completely different atmosphere the clock strikes for the third time. Now the hour incorporates the mood of the characters. In this passage Clarissa and Richard feel the hour as an intruder and it is as such that the hour is described:

> The sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigour, as if a youngman, strong, indifferent, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that.(p.44)

In this passage the opposition is set by the duration (in Bergsonian terms) of the characters against the indifference of clock or conceptual time. Clarissa and Peter, even not having seen each other for some 30 years, do not feel the influence of chronological time upon them in a decisive way because what matters is their inner duration; they are the same in the essence and their feelings towards each other are almost the same as they were 30 years before. They feel as young as they were at Bourton, though the clock comes to show how time has actually parted them for three decades. Chronological time is inconsiderate with inner feelings because it keeps going on despite the people's will to stop it at certain moments of life. Time is indifferent to any kind of hindrance and, thus, it never stops.

When the clock strikes for the fourth time Clarissa is not present. It is Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked young man, who hears the clock this time:

As he sat smiling, the quarter struck -
the quarter to twelve.(p.64)

This passage begins a little before, when Rezia says "It is time"(p.63). Then, Septimus thinks: "The word 'time' split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them hard, white, imperishable, words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time;an immortal ode to Time. He sang. Evans answered from behind the tree"(p.63). At that moment Septimus had just 'seen' a friend of his who died in the War. In a way, Septimus' madness surpasses time, for he 'sees' the ones who have ceased to exist and, therefore, goes against the clock rules. Septimus smiles and the clock strikes. His smile shows he is not influenced by time because for him reality blends with non-reality. If there is no clear boundary between reality and fantasy, we can also say that there is no conceptual time in his world. For Septimus, there is only time while duration. His insanity provides him with the fundamental ego from Bergsonian philosophy, because he manages, by excluding all exterior and practical things, to live in a real durée. And, eventually, he commits suicide. Graham points out that, when Septimus commits suicide, "the emphasis upon the fact that he was lately taken from life (the life of self, the life of time) to death (the annihilation of self, the transcendence of time): all suggest that Septimus had had the vision of a cosmic unity which Clarissa, rooted as she is in the process of time, can receive only dimly and briefly"(1970:30).

At twelve o'clock both Clarissa and the Warren Smiths hear the clock striking:

> It was precisely twelve o'clock; twelve by Big Ben; whose stroke was wafted over the northern part of London; blent with that of other clocks, mixed in a thin ethereal way with the clouds and wisps of smoke and died up there among the seagulls - twelve o'clock struck as Clarissa Dalloway laid her green dress on her bed, and the Warren Smiths walked down Harley Street.(p.84)

This is exactly the middle of the book and the middle of the day, and Virginia Woolf puts together the two main characters of the novel - Clarissa and Septimus who are both preparing themselves for something; Clarissa is getting ready for the party; Septimus , for his death. The description of the hour presents the stroke of Big Ben "blent with that of the other clocks"; however, this kind of bells' choir, instead of being imposing, mixes "in a thin ethereal way with the clouds" and "dies up there among the seagulls". Here we have the repetition of the symbolism of the seagulls which appeared in the eleven o'clock passage. Thus, the hour dissolves into the air, into the natural element, as in the previous passages and, again, the flux of life swallows this interruption, this mark on its flow.

This blending of Big Ben with the strokes of other clocks could also stand for the rest of human beings who will also "dissolve" with the "clouds and wisps of smoke". The elements V. Woolf uses in the descriptions of the hours all seem to fly - clouds, smoke, seagulls, and to dissolve like time and human beings.

The next clock passage is very similar to the third one. The hour is, again, described according to the feelings of Septimus and Rezia who are making to an appointment with Doctor Bradshaw:

> Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, until the mound of time was so far diminished that a commercial clock, suspended above a shop in Oxford Street, announced genially and fraternally, as if it were a pleasure to Messrs. Ribgy and Lowndes to give the information gratis, that it was half-past one.(p.91)

The clocks of Harley Street seem to be a personification of Doctor Bradshaw. This passage is, therefore, an antecipation of what Septimus is going to face right afterwards. The scientism of the psychiatrist is vehemently criticised through this passage. The authoritative aspect of Bradshaw's personality will turn to be responsible for Septimus' death. Under the authority of science Septimus had to be submissive, otherwise he had no chance in life. The pressure of Doctor Bradshaw allied to that of Doctor Holmes shall diminish Septimus' mound of time to nothing. The situation Virginia Woolf creates here, by using words such as "dividing and subdividing", "a sense of proportion", is the representation of conceptual time; a heavy, authoritative, artificial and imposed time. The end of this passage is particularly ironical insofar as the detail of "information gratis" gives the reader the idea of a last token of sarcasm towards the sientific and progressive society of the author's time which had no sense of the psychological time , only of its chronological existence.

When Big Ben strikes for the seventh time Clarissa is again present and alone. Here, there are two passages which complement each other, but the hour is only given in the second one. Clarissa is in her drawing-room listening to the clock:

> Big Ben was beginning to strike, first the warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable(p.104).... The sound of Big Ben flooded Clarissa's drawing-room ... with its melancholy wave; which receded, and gathered itself to fall once more.... Three, good Heavens! Three already! For with overpowering directness and dignity the clock struck three;(p.105)

The first passage is a representation of the motif presented in the first clock passage and this motif, very interestingly, only occurs when Clarissa is alone. The second passage, brings a new element to the description of the hour: the waves. The strokes are described as if they were waves breaking onto Clarissa's shore. It is important to notice that it is a "melacholy wave" but that it has, at the same time, "overpowering directness and dignity".

In other words, this passage brings another symbol of the flux of life which is, more precisely, the endless movement of the waves forming and breaking on the shore. As the clock keeps striking its hour only to be encompassed by the flux of life, so come the waves only to be encompassad by the sea and there is a certain melancholy and dignity in this incessant movement.

The next to last clock striking occurs at 3:30 p.m. Clarissa is alone again but this time she is observing another person - the old lady opposite her house, her neighbour:

> Big Ben struck the half-hour.
> How extraordinary it was, strange, yes, touching to see the old lady (they had been neighbours ever so many years) move as if she were attached to that sound, that string. Gigantic as it was, it had something to do with her. Down, down, into the midst of ordinary things the finger falls, making the moment solemn. She was forced, so Clarissa imagined, by that sound, to move, to go - but where? (p.113)

The clock is contrasted here with the "ordinary things". The daily

life of the old lady is linked to the gigantic clock, i.e., to the universal time because the old lady is part of this gigantic clock; she is inserted in this universal time which is not linked to the conceptual time of man but to the endless flux of life while duration. In some way, the clock urges the old lady to move because the passage of time does not wait for people. The old lady seems to want to set her footsteps right with time, she does not wish to be left behind to die. Clarissa, very sensitively, observes this urgency for life which makes the lady move herself.

This passage is linked to the next one in a wonderful way. The scene is the same but there is a twelve-hour gap separating them. Clarissa observes the old lady opposite at 3:00a.m. after having meditated about Septimus' death:

> The clock begun striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him; with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with all this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him - the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room.(p.165)

Graham (1970:29) called our attention to the fact that in many of Virginia Woolf's books "the room symbolizes the selfhood in time. From her small room, then, Clarissa looks out and sees the supreme mystery: that people exist in the same stream of time, each moving under compulsion of the time-flow.... " This scene is extremely important for the novel, for Clarissa had a revelation of her own

looking at the lady opposite, thinking about Septimus' death and listening to the clock striking. It is the combination of these elements that leads Clarissa to decide to "go back". The old lady's solemnity in ordinary life, Septimus' dignity in death, and the clock with its overpowering directness marking the flux of life help Clarissa to opt for life and for being glad to be alive. This passage is in such a way important that it brings together two main motifs of the novel. Firstly, the line from *Cymbeline*, "fear no more the heat of the sun" which reveals the serenity of a person who is not afraid of temporal things. Secondly, the sentence "the leaden circles dissolved into the air" which brings back the notion of the chronological time which is perpetually encompassed by the flux of life.

All these clock passages reveal the craftsmanship of Virginia Woolf. She manages to create both the impression of fluidity and of a tight chronological structure. The first is represented mainly through symbols and images of the flow of life. And the later, by the strokes of Big Ben. The images and contrasts analysed in this section lead the reader to connect, as Bergson does, the individual duration to a more encompassing one, that of the universe. The symbols establish the connection between consciousness and natural time which, as Bergson says, has a parallel duration to ours (this idea shall be better explained in section IV.2).

II.3. The Use of Memory

Through a study of *Mrs Dalloway* I have detected that Virginia Woolf uses three different types of memory in this novel:

involuntary recollection, association of ideas and analytical recollection. These different types are the devices employed by Virginia Woolf to diversify the recurrent use of memory in this book. Memory plays as important a role as the temporal pattern in this narrative because it enables the novelist to create the depth she could not attain in describing her characters in such a limited fictional time. Through memory, the past of her characters comes into the novel and reveals the characters' consciousness, and thus the reader gets important information to understand their present lives.

An excellent example of involuntary recollection appears at the very first page of the book:

> What a lark! What a plungle! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air.(p.5)

Through this passage Clarissa's past in Bourton, some thirty years ago, is brought involuntarily into surface by the "little squeak of the hinges". The past comes into the character's mind through the senses and melts with the fictional present in a very subtle way. One does not even know how to distinguish present from past. For instance, one is not able to ascertain whether the "little squeak" belongs to the present moment, or to her memory, or to both. For "she could hear now" can imply listening with present ears or with the ears of memory.

The rest of the paragraph in which Clarissa had this involuntary recollection is almost completely made of other remembrances from Bourton. Peter Walsh, a very important

character, is brought into the novel through Clarissa's mind because of the "squeak of the hinges".

This type of involuntary recollection is very much Bergsonian. It is what Bergson called 'memoire par excellence' and it is very well explained in *Matter and Memory* (1919:95). Bergson believes that some external events can bring memories to mind without the person's voluntary wish to remember.

Shiv Kumar, in his essay "Virginia Woolf and Bergson's 'Memoire Par Excellence'"(1960:316) associates very cleverly the novelist's and the philosopher's position concerning memory in the following way: "In evoking such involuntary memories of the past, Virginia Woolf adopts the same attitude as Bergson in suggesting that once the reel of memory unwinds itself, all the little details, important and unimportant, emerge from their ambush in their pristine colour and warmth". For Bergson (1919:92), pure memory is the one which records, in the form of memory images, everything that happens to ourselves in our day-to-day existence as they occur in time; pure memory forgets no detail; it prints upon each fact its place and date. In the novel, one notices that Clarissa's memory is alert, for it brings into consciousness the remembrace of the place and date of a similar "little squeak of the hinges" she heard in the past. And once Clarissa's memory is awakened she brings back a number of details of the time she was eighteen in Bourton. The remembrances are conveyed in a compact way but the reader can perceive that Clarissa remembers both the external atmosphere and her inner feelings at that time. And this is a characteristic of Bergson's 'memoire par excellence'.

"Although Virginia Woolf does not make any clear distinction between the voluntary and involuntary memory", as

Kumar says, "she does, none the less, address herself frequently to Bergson's 'memoire par excellence'" (1960:314). Therefore, I have the impression that the involuntary memory is at the basis of the other types of memories I have detected in *Mrs Dalloway*.

Another device V. Woolf uses to show memory at work is the association of ideas. This type of memory is involuntarily raised by imagination and, with the characters' conscious help , develops into a chain of thoughts in a quite voluntary process.

One of these chains begins when Clarissa is going upstairs after having received the note from Lady Bruton. Clarissa sees her bedroom, in the attic, and thinks about her loneliness because, among other things, she sleeps alone in a narrow bed. Her loneliness is a bridge for Clarissa to think of her scruples - "she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet"(p.30). From the thought of her scruples Clarissa starts an analysis of her feelings toward women - "She could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman"(p.30). Then, after a detailed analysis of her feelings toward women, Clarissa observes her bedroom and this sight serves as a contrast to the long chain of association which was going on in her mind: "It was over - the moment. Against such moments (with women too) there contrasted (as she laid her hat down) the bed and Baron de Marbot's *Memoir* and the candle half-burnt"(p.30). The chain of association of ideas is interrupted by interference of Clarissa's environment. Her eyes caught her bedroom and forced her to stop thinking in order to feel its concrete presence at that moment.

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However, the chain does not end here, it is just interrupted. Clarissa re-opens the chain by taking the question of

love with women back and, this time, relating it to Sally Seton. Clarissa's recollection is totally voluntary. Clarissa even asks herself questions to precise the place she first met Sally: "Where could it have been? The Mannings'? The Kinloch-Jones's? At some party (Where she could not be certain)" (p.30). Clarissa goes on and on describing to herself both Sally's features and personality. After that, Clarissa analyses her own feelings toward Sally at that time. This part of the chain, however, shall be analysed later on because it illustrates another type of memory. This long chain of association still leads Clarissa to think about Peter and Bourton. Only after this final thought does she go back, definitely, to the present and, thus, ends the chain.

Through conversation one can also recollect things from the past, for one can begin a chain of association as the one described above. It is also a voluntary type of memory and it does not appear very often in this novel. Through conversation one usually evokes parts of his past life. However, in rare moments the totality of one's past can be brought into surface during a conversation. The quotation I have chosen to exemplify this type of memory is the one in which Clarissa's whole past is reviewed through her questioning of Peter about the lake:

> Do you remember the lake? she said, in an abrupt voice, under the pressure of an emotion which caught her heart, made the muscles of her throat stiff, and contracted her lips in a spasm as she said 'lake'. For she was a child throwing bread to the ducks, between her parents, and at the same time a grown woman coming to her parents who stood by the lake, holding her life in her arms, until it became a whole life, a complete life, which she put down by them and said, "This is what I have made of it! This!' And what had she made of it? What, indeed? sitting there sewing this morning with Peter. (p. 39-40)

Clarissa's question brings a pang of emotion over herself. The word 'lake' and everything it implies brings into Clarissa's mind the feeling of being a child and a grown-up woman at the same time. The essence of her life is offered to her parents by the lake. Clarissa's thought reveals one of those rare moments when a person feels the totality of one's duration. She realizes the importance of what she has lived and of the wholeness of her past upon her present life. The end of this passage seems to have an existentialist touch because Clarissa questions herself about the purpose of her life, and about what she had really done deciding not to marry Peter. The decision she took 30 years ago of not marrying Peter Walsh is brought to her mind by Peter's presence and she seems to acknowledge that her freedom to choose brought her some losses. This passage of the lake, among other things, shows very well the Bergsonian motto of "continuity in motion".

In these types of memory use - involuntary recollection, association of ideas and its sub-type, the dialogue, Virginia Woolf presents the characters' view of the past more or less as they remember it. However, in the analytical memory, the character filters the past. In other words, the character analyses a person known in the past putting together in his analysis what the person meant to him in the past and what she means to him at the present. The character sees the person with double eyes: the eyes of the present and of the past. In this novel one finds examples of this type of memory use concerning Clarissa's feelings toward Sally, Sally's toward Peter and Peter's toward Clarissa.

Clarissa's analysis of Sally is one of the most representative of this type of memory because, occuring twice, it

has a variety of feelings which help the reader to understand both Clarissa's old feelings toward Sally and her present impression of her old friend. Clarissa, while in her attic bedroom, has evoked Sally's remembrances through the idea of falling in love with women. After the recollection she makes of Sally's features and personality, Clarissa begins to analyse her old feeling toward Sally:

> The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested....It was protective, on her side; ...For in those days she [Sally] was completely reckless; did the most idiotic things out of bravado; ... But the charm was overpowering, to her at least, so that she could remember standing in the bedroom at the top of the house holding the hot-water can in her hands and saying aloud, 'She is beneath this roof....'(p.32)

One can realize through the above quotation that Clarissa's analysis of her old feeling is based on what she is in the present. It is an adult view of the grown-up girl she was. Clarissa defines here, through a very fine analysis, what she could only define , then, through the exclamative sentence 'She is beneath this roof!' When Clarissa meets Sally Seton later at her own party this sentence of pleasure comes back to her mind, but this time there is no deep emotion as in the past. At the end of Clarissa's analysis of her feeling toward Sally, Clarissa had already acknowledged that 'the words [she is beneath this roof!] meant absolutely nothing to her now. ' What Clarissa perceives through her analysis is that there cannot be repetition of feelings from the past: "She could not even get an echo of her old emotion". Clarissa can remember how she felt then ('cold with

excitement and doing her hair in a kind of ecstasy') very clearly but she is not able to feel the same thing anymore. Duration cannot repeat itself, not even once, for life is an accumulation of feelings which transform themselves incessantly by the accretion of new things. Any remembrance would not be equal to the event in the past because we look back at it through the eyes of the present which have seen innumerable things since then and, therefore, the eyes are not the same (see Bergson 1944:184; 1979:16).

Looking at Sally later at the party, Clarissa's present impression of her old friend is given as a contrast to that one of the past:

> But her voice was wrung of its old ravishing richness; her eyes not aglow as they used to be, when she smoked cigars, when she ran down the passage to fetch her sponge bag without a stitch of clothing on her.... (p.160)

Through this passage one realizes that the Sally whom Clarissa meets at the party is almost another person under Clarissa's eyes. The Sally whom Clarissa had loved is alive only in the remembrances. Through the above analysis, the narrator presents to the reader the two antagonistic views Clarissa has of the same person, Sally Seton. This antagonism shows that Clarissa's consciousness, i. e., her duration does not repeat itself and, for this very reason, lasts.

Peter's view of his relationship with Clarissa provides another good example of analytical memory. Peter Walsh arrives at his hotel after having talked to Clarissa in the morning and his mind is crowded with images of her. To sum up, he has been

daydreaming about Clarissa. In his mind he analyses his past and present relationship with Clarissa in the following way:

> Looking back over that long friendship of almost thirty years her theory [about death] worked to this extent. Brief, broken, often painful as their actual meetings had been, what with his absences and interruptions..., the effect of them on his life was immeasurable. There was a mystery about it. You were given a sharp, acute, uncomfortable grain - the actual meeting; horribly painful as often as not; yet in absence, in most unlikely places, it would flower out, open, shed its scent, let you touch, taste, look about you, get the whole feel of it and understanding, after years of lying lost. (p.136)

Peter's analysis of Clarissa is very much Bergsonian in so far as it presents an event, or thing, which can 'after years of lying lost' be retrieved and finally understood. The accumulation of experiences being forgotten in the unconscious and, at last, 'in most unlikely places' flowering out into consciousness reminds one of Bergson's idea of the cone.

II.4. Conclusion

The Bergsonian duration, which has already been hinted at through the symbols of fluidity in contrast to the clock pattern apears more clearly through Virginia Woolf's use of memory which I shall try to sum up in a few paragraphs.

The first type of memory used in *Mrs Dalloway*, the involuntary recollection, is the unexpected and unwilling recollection of the past to which Bergson gave the name of 'mémoire par excellance'. This term was chosen by Bergson due to the fact that it is through this type of memory that a person is

able to recollect exactly what happened, with innumerable details, at a certain time of his past in a completely involuntary manner.

The second type of memory used by V. Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* is the association of ideas. It implies a voluntary recollection which is usually provoked by an idea which expands itself and naturally leads to another idea linked in some way to the previous one, and so on. Bergson would have said that Virginia Woolf's use of this type of memory is an instrument of practice to our minds. This type of memory enables the person to bring to surface things he believed completely forgotten. In this type of memory I have also included the dialogue which can start a chain of association about a part of the past or about its totality.

The third and last kind of memory use I have detected in *Mrs Dalloway* is the analytical recollection. In this analysis the character relives the past through the eyes of the present, or else, his present mind translates his past. Bergson's idea of duration in which one can have no identical moments in one's life can be very well illustrated by this type of memory.

III. TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

III.1. Introduction

Comparing *Mrs Dalloway* to *To the Lighthouse*(1985)[1], one may notice that the narrative structure with which Virginia Woolf endowed the second novel is rather different from the first one. While *Mrs Dalloway* is a one-blow novel, without any kind of chapter division, *To the Lighthouse* is a novel divided into parts and subdivided into chapters. This first difference allows the reader to notice others such as, for instance, the pace. Quick, breathless, almost frantic,the pace in *Mrs Dalloway* contrasts with the slow and sometimes almost inmobile pace of *To the Lighthouse*. One of the things which contributes to create a speedy pace in *Mrs Dalloway* is the presence of a very short chronological line : the whole novel encompasses less than twenty-four hours; besides, there is no interruption in the form of chapters, as I have already said. *To the Lighthouse*, in its turn, conveys a slow pace throughout the book, especially in the ten-year gap covered by part two. Consequently, all these years are abridged in a single part; a decade passes in an almost imperceptible way.

But, although *To the Lighthouse* displays a different structure from *Mrs Dalloway*, it has also some affinities with the Bergsonian theory of time presented in the first chapter.

In *To the Lighthouse* one does not find a clock with such importance as Big Ben had in *Mrs Dalloway*, although the reader is

[1] The year refers to edition used. From now on,in this chapter,I shall only refer to page number concerning *To the Lighthouse*.

informed about the fictional time in some occasions. This time, Mrs Woolf decided for dividing the book into three major parts and each part has its peculiar atmosphere. In this novel, Virginia Woolf attempted to show the temporal structure through the narrative frame itself, instead of inserting a clock as Big Ben.

It was James Wilson, in his article "Time and Virginia Woolf", who called my attention to the relationship between the three parts of the book and its temporal structure. He explained that "*To the Lighthouse* is fashioned like an hourglass and this form must have been consciously chosen, for everything in this book is in terms of time"(1942:270).

I consider Wilson's observation extremely relevant and intend to analyse this novel taking into consideration its hourglass structure and the relationship among its three parts in terms of time. The drawing below will help the reader to visualize the frame of the novel and its correspondence to the hourglass according to James Wilson:

— — — — → Part I : 'The Window'

— — — — → Part II : 'Time Passes'

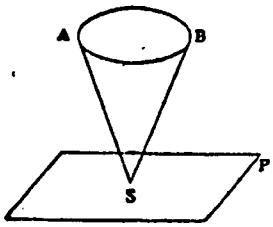
— — — — → Part III : 'The Lighthouse'

Hourglass

I also intend to establish a connection between the frame of Mrs Woolf's novel and Henri Bergson's image of the cone already mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation (see pp. 22-3), but which I shall expand now.

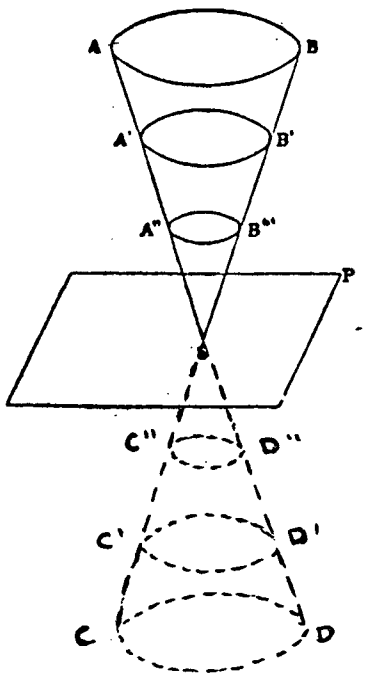
Bergson first presented his idea of the cone in *Matter and Memory* (1919). In order to explain his idea to the reader in a

more effective way Bergson presents its visualization through a drawing which is reproduced in picture 2. Bergson explains that the section AB represents the part of one's consciousness which is situated in the past; S stands for the present moment which is always going forward touching incessantly the plane P which stands for our present representation of the universe. Bergson believes that what is within SAB is the totality of one's past (p.197).



Picture 2

After explaining this first drawing Bergson presents another representation of the cone (p.211). This time the cone is shown as infinite,or rather, as growing towards AB endlessly. When I observed this second picture an idea came to my mind immediately. I wondered : if there were another cone beginning at the same point S, what could one make of it? Let me show a drawing in which I put together both ideas, mine and Bergson's (picture 3).The first thing I could realize when I analysed this new drawing was that the shape of it reminded me of an hourglass; and if one thinks of the cone SCD as representative of the totality of the future which constantly throws reality inside the cone SAB (the cone of the past) through the common point S, then one shouldobe willing to say that the two cones not only remind one of an



picture 3

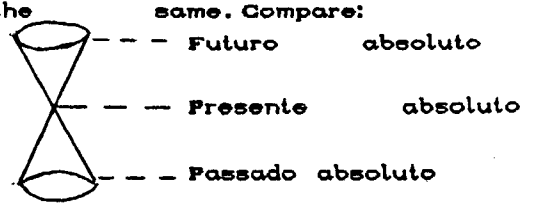
hourglass but they seem to function like one[2].

This observation leads one to see an interesting similitude between the form on which *To the Lighthouse* is fashioned and the form on which Bergson conveyed his idea of memory and duration. If one puts the two cones in inverted positions, SCD above and SAB below the plan S, then one should have an endless hourglass, symbolically speaking; for the cone of the future would fill in the cone below with things, impressions, sights, etc from reality. As the hourglass needs to be inverted in order to go on working, so does our symbolic hourglass .In other words, the accumulated past from cone SAB becomes part of the present endlessly. Therefore, the size of the two cones remains the same; the movement between them, I mean, the hourglass movement, always happens keeping them with the same size.

It should be better if one could think of the plane P as encompassing the whole inferior cone in which the point S would represent only the intersection between individual consciousness with the total reality, which is always larger than the point of the individual consciousness.

The hourglass I have just described is the symbolic accomplishment of Bergsonian duration because in it the whole past is accumulated and keeps growing endlessly.A detailed

[2] Quite surprisingly I discovered, some time after I had written this passage, a quite similar drawing to my picture 3 in Stephen Hawking's *Uma Breve Historia do Tempo : Do Big Bang aos Buracos Negros* (1988:53); of course,he does not speak as Bergson,taking the conscience as a starting point, but nevertheless the visual representation is exactly the same. Compare:



analysis of each part of *To the Lighthouse* and how they correspond to the hourglass structure are presented below.

III.2. The Window

James Wilson (1942) writes that "in the first part 'The Window',the human personalities are in motion like luminous grains of sand, or to use a figure from the book itself, 'each separate but all marvellously controlled in an invisible net'"(p.270). Based on this assertion I intend to demonstrate that the first part of the novel can be described as the upper part of an hourglass as well as the cone SCD, or the cone of the future, from picture 3.

In part one, there are only a few given chronological references which help the reader imagine the fictional time, but these references are not as relevant data as they were in *Mrs Dalloway*. However, they help the reader make some associations between chronological references and the time structure of the novel as a whole. Although these references are not so important as the hourglass structure itself, I think it is necessary to present them because they are intimately connected with the thesis proposed.

The first of these chronological references appears on page 23. The reader gets to know that "it was September after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening." The fictional time of the first part of the novel is in itself a period of transition, for it begins at the end of the afternoon and also at the end of summer. If one compares this first part of the novel to the upper part of the hourglass one could say about

the latter that its sand is also in constant transition towards the bottom.

The next explicit reference to time is given at the moment Mr and Mrs Ramsay are walking together: "He flicked his watch carelessly open. But it was only just past seven. " Time, in the first pages, seems to have been passing slowly. In other words, only one hour had elapsed in more than forty pages. However, the last chronological reference given in part one brings another evidence. Later, the reader is informed that " it was almost eleven". Thus, in forty pages more, four hours have run giving an indication of the acceleration of speed which is, perhaps, an anticipation of the end of this part. If one goes back to the hourglass comparison one can say that the upper part of an hourglass seems to lose its sand more quickly when it is almost empty; and the time in part one of the novel seems to pass faster when it is near the end. An interesting quotation comes before the end of this first part: "It had become ... already the past"(p.103), thinks Mrs. Ramsay. It seems that the character is aware that all those happenings, as the sand in the hourglass, were going down her consciousness to become the past.

James Wilson, quoting a metaphor from *To the Lighthouse*, says that each character, in part one, is 'separated' from the others but 'all controlled together by an invisible net.' I do agree with this observation because it is clear that although the characters are all together in the summer house, they have each individually different minds. The strong effect of individuality in the midst of other people is achieved through memory. The connection between memory and individuality seems to be closely linked to the Bergsonian idea of consciousness which is always

individual, never inter-personal, because one's consciousness, as well as one's memory and duration, is unique.

In this first part of the book, the involuntary type of memory (see I.2.b.) is often used due to the fact that it is fast and independent of the characters' will and, therefore, fits the first part of the novel which is the most active one.

A passage in which Lily Briscoe is talking to William Bankes about Mr. Ramsay's system of philosophy shows how memory functions involuntarily:

> 'Oh but,' said Lily, 'think of his work!'
> Whenever she 'thought of his work' she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table.(p.26)

Lily, in a moment of interaction with Mr Bankes, shows what she has of individual; and this private side is shown through the involuntary memory which comes to Lily's mind as an image. This sudden image is explained afterwards due to the fact that Lily can trace back what caused the image to emerge. She explains that "it was Andrew's doing. She asked him what his father's books were about. 'Subject and object and the nature of reality', Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that means. 'Think of a kitchen table then', he told her, 'when you're not there'"(p.26). One can notice that through involuntary memory Lily goes back to her past and remembers a whole conversation, (through voluntary memory this time), although she is talking to Mr. Bankes at the same time.

Memory mixes with the present reality,but it only occurs in relation to the person who remembers because the other one, in this case Mr. Bankes, does not participate or even notice anything

that is being remembered. However, for Lily, the recalled image impregnates the surroundings: "So she always saw, when she thought of Mr. Ramsay's work, a scrubbed kitchen table. It lodged now in the fork of a pear tree, for they had reached the orchard"(p.26). From this passage one can see very clearly how past intermingles with present and how one's individuality is preserved and conveyed. Both effects are achieved through Virginia Woolf's use of memory.

Another good example of involuntary memory is given when Mrs Ramsay is reading the story for James. She is thinking about life and its problems while she reads the story: "Yet she had said to all these children, you shall go through with it. To eight people she had said relentlessly that (and the bill for the greenhouse would be fifty pounds)"(p.58). The sentence in parentheses comes as an interruption of Mrs. Ramsay's flow of thought and it comes involuntarily. The same sentence reappears in the same passage: "Marriage needed - oh all sorts of qualities (the bill for the greenhouse would be fifty pounds)"(p.59). The sentence in parentheses functions like a line from a song or a poem which comes to her mind recurrently among the most varied thoughts. Therefore, one can see three levels of narrative in this passage: the first, the reading of the story for James in the drawing-room; the second, the organized thoughts in Mrs. Ramsay's mind which go forward in sequence; and thirdly, the subconscious level which comes once in a while to consciousness and interrupts the chain of association of ideas of the second level. The second and third levels are distinguishedly conveyed by different types of memory use: the association of ideas and the involuntary recollection, respectively.

The use of memory in double levels creates, in a denser way, the effect of individuality which has been shown above through Lily's example. This process is an indispensable device in Mrs. Woolf's novels. The novelist herself, in *A Writer's Diary* (1953), names this process as "caves behind the characters"(p.60). Virginia Woolf needed these 'caves' to give depth to her characters because of the very short fictional time of her narratives, and the technical way she found out to convey these caves was the use of memory; however, this is the use of a Bergsonian memory, for not only does the novelist reveal the past but she also reveals the characters' conscious and unconscious sides at work. In other words, V. Woolf shows the characters in their wholeness because she manages to present the dynamic movement of time in their minds.

'The Window', with its large number of characters, with its few but significant time references, and with its use of involuntary memory, resembles the upper part of the hourglass. This is so because the number of characters generates an impression of activity; time seems to pass slowly at the beginning and faster at the end of this part; and finally, the characters, although together in the same house, are shown as independent and personalized by their duration. All these aspects, as I have demonstrated, make one think of the upper part of the ordinary, and the symbolic hourglass. The cone SCD, as 'The Window', collects in itself a great variety of activities, impressions, perceptions which come to human consciousness through the point S, or the neck of the hourglass, which shall be analysed in the next section.

III.3. 'Time Passes'

Although the neck of the hourglass is the part through which the sand passes, nobody can measure time just by looking at it; one has to look at and compare the other two bigger parts in order to verify how much time has passed. The middle of the hourglass gives the impression, if one keeps looking at it, that no one can measure that constant and seemingly endless flux of sand, and that although one sees the sand passing one does not perceive any difference in it. In other words, one could keep looking at the passage of sand for some time and would not be able to say how much due to the sameness of vision printed upon one's eyes by the passage of sand through this part of the hourglass.

The way by which part two of *To the Lighthouse* develops looks like the description above. Concerning this second part of the novel James Wilson writes: "Then, through the brief second part of the novel, 'Time Passes,' the house stands empty, until the most inarticulate cleaning woman comes, and events run like falling grains in the narrow neck"(p.270-1).

The second part of *To the Lighthouse* actually begins when Mr. Carmichael blows out his candle in chapter 2 of this part, for it is here that V. Woolf describes how "with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof, a downpouring of immense darkness began"(p.117). Then in the next chapters come the important descriptions of the night and of the abandoned house.

First of all, I would like to call attention to an

important detail: only in the beginning and ending chapters of this second part does V. Woolf give specific chronological references such as "[...it was past midnight]"(p.118) or "[...late one evening in September]"(131) - the use of brackets shall be explained later in this chapter. In the rest of this part of the novel there is no more than vague mentioning to periods of the day and to seasons, as for instance: "Night after night, summer and winter, the torment of storms, the arrowlike stillness of fine weather, held their court without interference".(p.125)

Here, in this part of the novel, there is the passage of time 'without the interference' of human mind and one tends to believe that duration, in the Bergsonian sense, is more perfect, or more visible without man; for the intellect creates dams along the flux of time in order to form stagnated lakes of memory and perception. Man needs to crystalize the flux into blocks of present and past in order to apprehend reality. One can even state that in man duration exists despite man's attempts not to let it flow.

One should remember that, for Bergson, the flux of life is what matters; however this flux cannot be measured in any way so past and present are relative, because they are only the apparent result of that invisible flowing essence; and they are man-made.

The second part of *To the Lighthouse* gives the reader the impression of the passage of time which affects things and brings decay. However, time without the presence of human beings is 'chaos'(p.125); for, without the presence of man, "(night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together)"(p.125).

Time as decay is interrupted only by the interference of

Mrs. McNab, the old cleaning woman. She "stayed the corruption and the rot; rescued from the pool of time that was fast closing over them now a basin, now a cupboard"(p.129). Mrs. McNab is decaying herself (she is 70 years old), but she tidies the decaying house because she still has life inside herself; and while there is a conscious life acting and forcing things upward, the downward force, the force of decay does not prevail, as Bergson says in his *A Evolução Criadora*(1979:21).

These two opposite movements which Bergson talks of can be symbolized by the old battle of mind against matter. The upward movement would be linked to the mind, to the creative force, while the downward movement would be representative of matter, of the decaying force. In this second part of the novel there is a passage which seems to illustrate Bergson's binomial of mind x matter: "If the feather had fallen, if it had tipped the scale downwards, the whole house would have plunged to the depths to lie upon the sands of oblivion. But there was a force working" (p.129); this force was life within Mrs McNab. In this quotation I surprisingly found the image of the sand which corresponds to the hourglass structure I am working with. However, this sand here would symbolize nothingness; for the sand of oblivion seems to encompass all matter that has been destroyed and therefore has disappeared from the living world of consciousness.

Although this part of the book is a description of an empty summer house. Virginia Woolf manages to use memory in it too. It occurs when Mrs McNab enters the house. "She unwound her ball of memories", says the narrator (p.130). (This quotation leads me to make a connection between V. Woolf's expression 'ball of memories' with Bergson's idea of the 'snowball'.

Virginia Woolf, in 'Time Passes,' uses a stylistic device not used in 'The Window,' - the brackets. They are the way found to introduce the things which were happening outside without breaking the continuity of the passage of time through the empty house. Thus, one of the first brackets in 'Time Passes' condenses an extremely important fact - Mrs. Ramsay's death:

> [Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.] (p.120)

The information about Mrs. Ramsay's death is not even the centre of the sentence. It appears incidentally; there is not much detail about her death except that is was sudden. However, this is only an interruption and as such it cannot contain much information.

The use of brackets serves to remind the reader that the characters' lives continue or cease to exist while the flux, without present or past, passes through the empty house. Thus, it is in parentheses that one knows that Prue got married and died soon afterwards (p.123), that Andrew died in the war (p.124), and that Mr. Carmichael, a friend, brought out a volume of poems(p.125).

One can compare 'Time Passes' with the neck of an hourglass (1) due to its absence of specific time references representing the passage of time without the 'interference of man' (2) due to the decay, or the movement downward, interrupted by the upward force represented by Mrs McNab, and (3) due to the use of brackets to introduce the events in parentheses, or as J. Wilson puts it "the events run like grains through the narrow neck." The second part of *To the Lighthouse* resembles the neck of the

hourglass because it represents the pure flux ; it also shows that wherever something exists there is the register of time inscribed on it, an inscription which is here is symbolized by decay. All the events which fall through the neck will be stored and transformed into new sources of life, the life of memory, the storage of past things which will come to surface someday. This deposit of events and memories is the subject of the next section.

III.4. 'The Lighthouse'

As the sand comes to a rest at the bottom part of the hourglass, so does the novel in this third part. James Wilson explains it better when he writes:

> Then time broadens out with the return of human consciousness to the empty dwelling. Two streams of consciousness are blended through the memories of Mrs. Ramsay; that of the woman trying to recover her vision of the unfinished painting as she watches the moving boat, and that of the occupants of the boat, especially Mr. Ramsay. The movement comes to a rest as the boat reaches the lighthouse and Lily Briscoe puts on her picture the dab of paint that completes her vision.(p.271)

The sand which comes down from the upper part of the hourglass seems to be symbolized here by the living memory of Mrs. Ramsay which unifies the consciousnesses rather disconnected in the first part of the novel. Here , in this third part, the pace of the narrative is slower than in part one due to the fact that the novel becomes spatial, pictorial, and, thus almost static as landscape. The narrative of 'The Lighthouse' is the sum of everything that has happened in part one up to that moment. Thus, part three is considered as a denser narrative than the previous

part and it resembles the bottom of an hourglass insofar as the bottom is a collector of sand and as such keeps the grains together.

The two main themes, Lily's picture and the voyage to the Lighthouse, were present in the first part but, as they were not accomplished then, they passed through the ten-year gap to be actually lived in this third part. These two themes are like two streams of sand coming down and being collected at the bottom of an hourglass to be transformed into a unity.

The beginning of 'The Lighthouse' is at eight in the morning (p.137). One can say that this third part is clearly a continuation of the first one, although there is an interval of ten years between them. The first part ends at almost eleven in the evening and the third part begins at eight in the morning.

The first and third parts are intimately linked by the second part of the novel, and no one can dismiss any of these parts, or the relationship among them, if one wants to understand the novel as a whole, just as no one can tell the time just by looking at one of the parts of the hourglass. No part alone can work or give the beholder the realization of the passage of time, either in the hourglass or in the novel. In the latter, one can see this intrinsinc relationship when, for instance, one only realizes that ten years have passed in part two when Lily Briscoe reflects in part three that "she had sat there last ten years ago..."(p.139); or when one compares "James was sixteen"(p.139) in part three with James "at the age of six"(p.9) in part one. This intrinsic relationship is also shown by the presence of an overlapping among the three parts. The fictional

time of Part one continues for the first two chapters of Part two, and the fictional time of the last two chapters of Part two also goes into Part three.

Memory is also used in this part as a main device; it serves to unify the first and third parts of the book. Examples of how memory unifies these two parts of the novel are many and very significant. In the very beginning of the third part Lily's string of memory is "unwound": "Suddenly she remembered. When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little spring or leaf pattern on the table cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation"(p.139). If one compares this remembrance with the original fact, one will see that they match perfectly: "She took up the salt cellar and put it down again on a flower in the pattern in the table-cloth, so as to remind herself to move the tree"(p.80). This kind of repetition through memory serves as a stitch, among many others, which Virginia Woolf uses to sew the parts of the novel together.

Mr. Ramsay, for instance, remembers things said about Lily: "There had been some talk of her marrying William Bankes once, but nothing had come of it"(p.141). The source of his remembrance is on Mrs. Ramsay's idea that "William and Lily should marry"(p.29), which she repeated several times in part one.

James is also a character who remembers, although he was only six in the first part of the book; but as Mrs. Ramsay had always said "children never forget", neither did James. His memories are not as clear as the adults' but they are as effective as theirs:

> There was a flash of blue, he remembered, and then somebody sitting with him laughed.... He began to

> search among the infinite series of impressions which time has laid down, leaf upon leaf, fold upon fold softly, incessantly upon his brain; among scents; sounds; voices, harsh, hollow, sweet; and lights passing, and brooms tapping; and the wash and hush of the sea, how a man had marched up and down and stopped dead, upright, over them.(p.157)

This description is a superb example of how memories are kept in a child's brain. The multitude of impressions, visual, auditive and emotional, intermingles to form the final result of an event occurred in childhood. This quotation is also illustrative of Bergson's motto 'everything is kept; nothing is forgotten'. As a means of comparison let us present the situation remembered when it first happened in part one: "But his son hated him. He hated him for coming up to them"(p.38). This passage has more of the narrator speaking than of the child himself but it helps to give the idea of what had happened then.

James also remembers his old symbol - a knife. In this remembrance even the words are repeated: "if there had been an axe handy, a knife, or anything with a sharp point he would have seized it and struck his father through the heart"(p.172). This recollection took place when James was on the boat on his way to the lighthouse, which was the place he anxiously desired to go in the first part of the novel. Now, let us compare the recollection with the original thought: "Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it"(p.9). All this fury against his father is linked to Mr Ramsay's saying repeatedly that "it won't be fine tomorrow"(p.9) and to James' disappointment about not going to the lighthouse the next day.

If one takes all these remembrances together and looks for a common point among them, one will notice that they are all about incomplete things: Lily's picture, Lily's marriage, the journey to the lighthouse, etc. These things were in suspension during the first part and some of them come to a conclusion in the third part of the novel.

The theme of the picture, as well as that of the boat, unites perfectly well the first and third parts of the book and helps to give a pattern to the narrative. The narrator emphasizes that this theme "had been knocking about in [Lily's] mind all these [10] years"(p.139). While time passed through the empty house, Lily's mind "kept throwing up from its depths,scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with green and blues"(p.149). This description of Lily's mind is the opposite of that 'chaos' of part two. Human consciousness gives order and function to things: "In the midst of chaos there was shape"(p.151).

Lily Briscoe had a problem to solve, and in solving it she achieved her vision. She describes this problem as a knot: "There was something ... she remembered in the relations of those lines cutting across ... which had stayed in her mind; which had tied a knot in her mind so that at odds and ends of time, involuntarily, as she walked..., as she brushed her hair, she found herself painting that picture,..., and untying the knot in imagination "(p.147). Lily is a character who goes deep into her past in order to accomplish her present. She needs to understand the innumerable relations which connect her to the other people she had met. As an artist she must sum up all she can

apprehend and put this 'vision' on a work of art. "As she dipped into the blue paint, she dipped too into the past there"(p.160). In Lily's picture past and present blend as it occurs in pure 'durée', according to Bergson. The narrator is more explicit about this connection between art and past/present time when she writes: "[Lily] went on tunneling her way into her picture, into the past"(p.160). This tunneling process is mentioned, in *A Writer's Diary* (1972:61), as Virginia Woolf's own way of telling the past of her characters by installments, as she had need of it. Lily Briscoe spends the whole morning in a tunneling process. After this kind of process she finally manages to finish her picture: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision"(p.192). Through the intersection of past and present Lily accomplished her picture. She had lived, with her profound ego, the pure 'durée', without making distinctions between present and former states, exploring her memory till the end. Lily's vision can be better understood if we quote a passage from *A Writer's Diary* in which Mrs Woolf describes a vision she herself had:

> Why is there not a discovery in life? Something one can lay hands on and say 'this is it'? My depression is a harassed feeling. I'm looking: but that's not it - that's not it. What is it? And shall I die before I find it? Then (as I was walking through Russell Square last night) I see mountains in the sky: the great clouds, and the moon which is risen over Persia; I have a great and astonishing sense of something there, which is 'it'. It is not exactly beauty that I mean. It is that the thing in itself is enough: satisfactory, achieved.(p.86)

The novelist's mood. in the above quotation, can be compared to Lily's insofar as both were anxiously searching. Both the novelist and the character were looking for something they did not know very well; then, both, unexpectedly were able to visualize something that meant deeply to them; but neither of them was capable of expressing it clearly at the moment of the vision.

Virginia Woolf also explains how she sees the connection between past and present in *Moments of Being* (1981):

> The past comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am living of the past; but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present. For the present when backed by the past is a thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close that you can feel nothing else, when the film in the camera reaches only the eye. (p.144)

Virginia Woolf only felt satisfied with herself when she could live the present and the past as one thing, and so did her character, Lily Briscoe. I think the importance of Lily's finishing her picture, at the very end of the novel, is fundamental for the book to the extent that it conveys wonderfully the idea of the intermingling of past and present states of the artist which results in a work of art: the picture. Furthermore, at that moment two works of art were being accomplished, the picture and the novel itself. Virginia Woolf's narrative is a demonstration of how one can experience and convey her experience of duration, since her book is a mixture of past events and people from her own life: her mother, her father, her childhood in Cornwall, etc. Lily's picture as well as Virginia Woolf's *To the*

Lighthouse. is a work of art created from impressions from her past which persisted till her present .

III.5. Conclusion

The grains of sand have come down together and have been deposited on the bottom part of the hourglass in the same way that the different lives and events have become past in the 'The Lighthouse.' However, memory is not something immobile, it has the capacity of turning the bottom of the hourglass upside down and of throwing its sand of recollection downward to fill the present.

The symbolic endless hourglass, which I have formed from Bergson's picture of the endless growing cone of consciousness, fits the relationship among the three parts of the novel. However, *To the Lighthouse* cannot be imprisoned by just one symbol. The endless hourglass is only a possible way I found to understand the novel a little in terms of what I was looking for - the time structure.

IV. THE WAVES

IV.1. Introduction

Irma Rantavaara, in her book *Virginia Woolf's The Waves* (1960:25), says that "time for [Virginia Woolf] always contains an antithetical element. Things happen in one second and last for ever. Virginia Woolf puts in juxtaposition the limited time of the clock and the unlimited time of the mind". This assertion comes to support what I have presented in the two previous chapters of this dissertation, i.e., the time structure in V. Woolf's novels is supported by juxtaposition, either between the character's present and past life, or between chronological time and the character's inner time, or by both kinds of juxtaposition.

The Waves (1985)[1] is a novel structured differently from the other two previously analysed, as *To the Lighthouse* was different from *Mrs Dalloway*. However this third novel keeps the main trait of the previous ones. It presents a temporal dichotomy as its main structural device, though this dichotomy is displayed more as a parallel than as an opposition. Thus, V. Woolf manages to create three novels so diverse in their structure as a whole and yet so closely linked in their temporal aspect.

The differences among the three novels consist mainly on

[1] The year refers to edition used. From now on, in this chapter, I shall only refer to page numbers concerning *The Waves*.

which shape V. Woolf chose to present them. Concerning division, for instance, each novel displays a different manner. In *Mrs. Dalloway* there were no chapter division. In *To the Lighthouse* there were three larger parts divided into smaller sections; and in *The Waves* there is, again, a kind of chapter division, although V. Woolf gives no name or number to these parts. In *The Waves*, the first noticeable division is between the italicized parts and the normal-printed ones. In italics come the parts which do not present much description of human consciousness. These italicized parts shall be called from now on "interludes" and the normal-printed parts, "sections". It is in these sections that the characters' minds are portrayed.

If one considers the last italicized sentence of the book as an interlude in itself, one can say, then, that there are ten interludes against nine sections in *The Waves*. Virginia Woolf's choice of differentiating the parts in which the characters appear from those in which they do not serves to establish one of the main technical devices used by this novelist to support the time structure of this novel: there is a parallel between the "sections" and the "interludes".

Virginia Woolf includes inside the characters' section a temporal parallel, but she does not use a clock (Big Ben) as she did in *Mrs. Dalloway*, she simply uses what I shall call "time indicators" and puts them side by side with the characters' everlasting now, with the characters' duration.

These dichotomies, the first between the interludes and the sections, and the second one, inside the sections, between the "time indicators" and the characters' duration, support the shape

of the time structure of this novel. Therefore, this chapter will be divided into the analysis of these two parallels : first, the analysis of the interludes and, secondly, of the sections.

IV.2. The Role of the Interludes

As a way of comparison one can say that the interludes constitute a more sophisticated version of the second part of *To the Lighthouse*, "Time Passes", for Virginia Woolf manages, this time, to exclude almost all human consciousness from it and also because elements such as the sun and the ocean give a more harmonized view of the duration of the universe as a whole, without giving much emphasis to the notion of decay, as she did in "Time Passes". Thus, in *To the Lighthouse* one can already find the primitive idea of the interludes : to provide the illusion of time passing without the presence of man. She used the technique called 'camera eye' to achieve this impression of absence of a consciousness. But, of course, one can always argue that behind the camera there is an eye of a person who is conscious.

Henri Bergson writes in his *A Evolução Criadora* that "...sucession is an unquestionable fact, even in the material world. Although our reasonings about isolated systems exemplify the past, present and future history of each of these systems as suddenly unfolded in a fan-like form, this history does not stop flowing uninterruptedly as if it occupied a duration similar to ours"(1979:20). Bergson states that "the universe lasts" and that "as the universe in its whole, as each conscious being individually, the living organism is something which

lasts (1979: 24).

To illustrate this belief Bergson gives the famous example of the glass of water and sugar. He simply says that if he wants to drink sugary water he needs to wait for the dissolution of the sugar. He explains through this seemingly simple example that the time which he had to wait is not the mathematical time anymore because it coincides with his impatience, or rather, with a part of his own duration, which cannot be extended or reduced according to any will. He says that it is not only a 'relation' between himself and the water of the sugar but that it involves the 'absolute' or the whole of the universe in which both his consciousness and the glass of sugary water are merged. He also says that this 'absolute' happens not because it exists only as a 'thought' in his consciousness but because it is 'lived' by the natural elements and by himself. Bergson concludes by questioning whether the glass of water, the sugar and the process of dissolution are not abstractions, and whether the whole from which these elements were cut out by his senses and by his comprehension may not advance in the manner of a consciousness (1979: 20). If the whole from which the above elements were cut out advances in the manner of a consciousness, it has a duration of its own which flows parallel to that of a consciousness.

Based on this aspect of Bergsonian duration one can say that the interludes are V. Woolf's way of showing the same belief as Bergson's: that there is a parallel duration of the universe and of the consciousness. This connection between the Bergsonian concept and V. Woolf's interludes may be illustrated throygh an analysis of the role of the sun, the sequence of appearance of

elements and the pattern of the interludes as a whole.

If one puts together all the first sentences of the interludes one will immediately notice how important a role the sun plays in them. The sun provides the notion of sequence for the interludes. It is mainly through the role of the sun that one notices that the interludes describe a process. It is a description of something in succession and with a duration. Every first line of the interludes gives the reader the position of the sun in the sky and thus the reader infers the solar movement, or rather, its succession:

> The sun had not yet risen.(p.5)
> The sun rose higher.(p.19)
> The sun rose.(p.49)
> The sun, risen, no longer couched on a green matress darting a fitful glance through watery jewels, bared its face and looked straight over the waves.(p.72)
> The sun had risen to its full height.(p.99)
> The sun no longer stood in the middle of the sky.(p.111)
> The sun had now sunk lower in the sky.(p.122)
> The sun was sinking.(p.140)
> Now the sun had sunk.(p.159)

The cycle of the sun is complete but it is, at the same time, incomplete since the solar movement is an endless succession. The sun as the rest of the universe lasts and carries with itself the history of its past. In the interludes, the sun is placed as one of the representatives of the upward and creative forces which Bergson talks about (Bergson,1979:21). Man took advantage of the cyclical movement of the sun and built the first type of instrument to fragment time in equal parts: the sundial. In the interludes the sun does not serve as time measurer in the

chronological sense; on the contrary, the sun is just one of the elements of the universe. The sun in itself does not measure anything, it is the human necessity to fragment the flux which imposes upon the sun the characteristic of measurer of time. The sun lasts incessantly and it cannot be measured in its duration.

Besides serving as an indicator of succession, the sun also serves as a unifying element. The light of the sun rays strikes the different elements which appear in the interludes and these elements, such as the ocean and the earth, are united.

The movement of uncovering the elements is made in the ocean-earth way and, then, at the end of the interludes, the movement goes back to the earth-ocean direction. This sequence of appearance of the elements in the interludes is similar to the endless movement of the waves breaking on the shore. In fact, there are four interludes which do not present this perfect wavy pattern, for there is no explicit mentioning of the ocean at the end of these interludes. However, they do not lack the movement back, except for the fourth interlude.In the seventh and ninth interludes the coming back movement in the direction of the ocean can be said to be present through metaphors. The seventh interlude presents, in the last sentence, words such as "wavered", "sailing" and "floating"(p 123-4) which give the connotation of a watery element; and the ninth interlude presents a description of darkness as a big wave: "As if there were waves of darkness in the air, darkness moved on covering houses, hills, trees, as waves of water wash round the sides of some sunken ship"(p.160). The first interlude does not present metaphors about the sea but it has a movement backwards which I shall explain when analysing this

interlude in detail. In the rest of the interludes the last sentence always goes literally back to the shore and, thus, completes the wavy pattern.

It is important to present the sequence in which the elements above appear, and in order to do so I have chosen the first interlude as an illustration. As I have already mentioned, the sun is the first element to appear in the interludes but I shall go directly to the second element, for the sun has already been fully discussed.

"The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it"(p.5). This is the second line of the first interlude and it brings within itself the second element to appear in these italicized parts: the sea. The sea, as well as the sun, establishes the notion of endless succession and duration. As the solar movement, the tidal movement is always complete and incomplete at the same time. For both sun and sea last, and duration is something which is never finished but it is always in a "state of becoming"(Bergson, 1944:198). In the following interludes the sequence sun-sea is the same but sometimes the word "sea" is replaced by some other word related to it such as waves, sand, or metaphors like "green-sea mattress" or "water-globed jewels"(p.99).

The third element to be touched by the sun rays is the earth: "The light struck upon the trees in the garden making one leaf transparent and then another"(p.5). The element earth is mainly represented by the garden and its elements (trees, flowers, etc), but it also comes under the name of rocks, cornfields,

woods, lawns, hills (p.79), desert or sandhills(p.99).

The garden makes a smooth transition from the first two elements, not controlled by man, to the fifth element which is limited and human made. However, before that comes the fourth element which appears within the garden: the birds. "One bird chirped high up. There was a pause; another chirped lower down"(p.5). This is the fourth line of the first interlude and it contains the fourth element. This element sometimes comes as a cat(p.49), a snail(p.73), gulls(p.100), a dragonfly (p.111), cattle(p.111), a horse(p.111), a flock of rooks(p.123), a moth or even as an owl(p.140). However, it is the bird which comes in all the interludes, and therefore, I have decided not to call the fourth element animals but birds.

As I mentioned above, the fifth element is human made and it is mainly represented by the house: "The sun sharpened the walls of the house, and rested like the tip of a fan upon the white blind and made a blue finger-print of shadow under the leaf by the bedroom window"(p.5-6). Almost every part of the house, inside and outside, is lit by the sun through its journey in the sky: furniture, kitchen, utensils, and other objects are differently seen according to the position of the sun.

The next element in almost all interludes would be the sea again but it does not happen in this first interlude. Instead of this there is a movement backwards at the end of the interlude which does not mention the sea: "The blind stirred slightly, but all within was dim and unsubstantial. The birds sang their blank melody outside"(p.6). These last lines show, at least, a tendency to end the interludes in a backward movement. Here, it goes from

"within" the house to the birds "outside" in the garden. As the backward movement to the sea is not completed here, although there is a backward movement of a different kind, I shall present the last line of the second interlude in which this type of movement occurs: "Meanwhile the concussion of the waves breaking fell with muffled thuds, like logs falling on the shore"(p.20). This example shows how the movement goes to the beginning of the sequence, back to the first sun-stricken element of the chain: the sea. Thus, as I have already said, a wavy effect is created insofar as the reading of the interludes makes the reader go from the sea to the earth and, then, backwards, as the waves do.

The wavy movement is also present in the pattern of the interludes as a whole, for the last line of the book, which I consider as an interlude (since it is italicized), is a coming back to the sea: "The waves broke on the shore"(p.200). This sentence comes to close the book, but, at the same time, it opens the ending insofar as the waves are a symbol for endless succession. Moreover to end the novel by an italicized line is the way Virginia Woolf found to close the parallel she established between the duration of natural things and the characters' duration. The parallel is closed because V. Woolf equals man's life to the breaking of a wave on the shore, and as the waves are constantly being renewed so are human beings.

This belief in a constant renewal of human beings and in the existence of a parallel duration between man's consciousness and natural things is also present in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. J. Graham, in his essay "Time in the Novels of Virginia Woolf", explains that "Clarissa tentatively theorizes

about the unifying power of human personality, the 'unseen part of us, which spreads wide," and which persists after death, relating the individual to the dead and the absent, and to all that they have known"(1970:29). This is one of the reasons why Clarissa belives that "the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places, after death"(pp.135-6). However, this vision of cosmic unity is much more present in Septimus' mind: "But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body.... The sparrows fluttering, rising and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern"(p.22). Therefore, Graham concludes that Septimus realizes there is a unifying reality hidden in the phenomena of time which gives them pattern and significance, and ... that the pattern is eternal because there is no death"(1970:30).

In *To the Lighthouse* these ideas are shown mainly by 'Time Passes' in which "night after night, summer and winter, the torment of storms, the arrow-like stillness of fine weather, held their court without interference"(p.125) and also by Mrs Ramsay who, even after death, saturates the book through other people's memory(see pp.168 and 186).

Both beliefs, in human renewal and in parallel durations, both of which are Bergsonian in their nature, are present in the three novels. However, it seems that it is in *The Waves*, due to its narrative structure, that these beliefs are better conveyed.

IV.3. Time Indicators

In the first part of this fourth chapter I presented how Virginia Woolf represented the Bergsonian natural time in the interludes and I also pointed out that the latter formed a parallel duration to that of the consciousnesses presented in the sections. Therefore, the parallel can only be complete if one presents how Mrs Woolf portrays the characters' consciousness and, consequently, their duration in *The Waves*. The second part of this chapter is made of an analysis of the temporal structure and the third part consists of an analysis of the use of memory and other Bergsonian concepts.

Irma Rantavaara says that "on the surface level *The Waves* is a chronological story stretching from childhood to old age, subjected to the modes of thought: time and space. On the deeper level, that of human consciousness, time can be presented as amorphous. The happenings in consciousness have the same irrationally ever-changing field of movement and shifting time as they have in sleep" (1960:28).

Virginia Woolf manages to put together the surface and the deeper levels, which Rantavaara refers to, by using precise structural devices. The surface level is represented here by the time indicators while the deeper level which concerns the duration of the characters is mainly presented through memory.

The chronological line of the story is supported by two kinds of devices: the first I shall call *time references* and the second *time markers*. The time references are formed by passages in which one finds words or sentences directly connected to usual

time images, such as clocks, bells, age, season, etc. The time markers are formed by passages which are not directly linked to usual time images but which mark, in their own way, the passage of time. Images such as a door opening and shutting, people passing or a drop falling form the time markers in *The Waves*.

Among the time references the image of the clock is the most used (aproximately 15 times), but it does not always appear as the measurer of time; sometimes it is only an image among others. Compare, for instance, these first two quotations with the last two ones:

> "The clock ticks. The two hands are convoys marching through a desert. The black bars on the clock face are green oases...." (p.14 - Rhoda), and
>
> "There was the beech wood... , and the gilt hands of the clock sparkling among the trees"(p.145 - Susan); with,
>
> "Why, look ... at the clock ticking on the mantelpiece? Time passes, yes. And we grow old" (p.119 - Neville), and
>
> "Yes, but suddenly one hears the clock tick. We who had been immersed in this world become aware of another" (p.185 - Bernard).

The first two passages present the clock as something without purpose, it is the character's imaginary life which makes the clock useful either to serve as a child's image, as Rhoda's, or to be one element of the landscape which will be remembered throughout life as the stable clock for Susan (see TW p.11). In this first case the consciousness engulfs the instruments to

measure time, and thus the clock becomes part of the character's duration.

In the two last passages there is a recognition of the clock, and it influences the characters' life to the extent that the clock is, as usual, measuring the time and it reminds them that they grow old, will die and that they have to come back from the unlimited time of the mind and to become aware of the common world: - a world in which there is only one time for everyboby, a world in which the individualities are not considered apart. All these inconveniencies of the chronological time lead Neville to express himself thus: "Meanwhile, let us abolish the ticking of time's clock with one blow"(p.122). This is exactly what Virginia Woolf does in *The Waves*. She does not use the clock as the main element to mark the passage of time in this novel. In fact, the time references as a whole are not half as important as the time markers in terms of building the illusion of the passage of time. However, before going to the analysis of the time markers, one needs to mention the time references concerning the age of the characters, for they give the idea of chronological succession. Here follow all the quotations concerning age I could find in *The Waves*:

"I am already at eighteen..." (p.48 - Neville)
"(I am not twenty yet)" (p.66 - Susan)
"I am not yet twenty-one" (p.72 - Rhoda)
"(the oldest is not twenty-five)" (p.83 - Bernard)
"Now a full-grown man" (p.113 - Louis)
"(...I am now past thirty, ...)" (p.117 - Jinny)
"Being now all of us middle-aged ..." (p.172 - Neville)
"...a rather heavy, elderly man, grey at the temple..." (p.161 - Bernard)

The quotations above show not only specific reference to age but also to periods of life and physical appearance, for they all help the reader to form the image of the characters' development in the novel. As one can notice there are only a few references to the characters' chronological age and, yet, three of them come within parentheses, as additional but dispensable information. Each of the characters expresses himself or herself at least once. One can notice that it is not the age but the characters' consciousness which is focussed on, for it is the mind which lasts and it is according to the characters' duration that everything happens.

The second kind of device which helps to support the temporal structure is the time markers. It was the reading of Irma Rantavaara's following words that helped me to acknowledge the importance of the time markers:

> Simple ordinary happenings like 'people passing', and 'a door opening', besides serving as rhythmical purposes, are repeatedly used as metaphors to heighten the impression of continuity, of time passing. They aim at giving the simple story a three-dimensional width and depth with time added as the fourth dimension. (1960:9) .

Virginia Woolf attempts to create in her novel an atmosphere of pure flow using some devices to give the reader the illusion of continuity throughout the book. The novelist's desire to express this flow is similar to Bergson's. The philosopher believes that the psychological life seems to be discontinuous because we only pay attention to discontinuous acts. However, he states that there is a background continuity upon which these

discontinuous acts emphasize themselves. For Bergson, the states are, thus, an endless continuation of each other without any interruption (Bergson, 1979;13-4).

Irma Rantavaara, in her analysis of *The Waves*, believes that expressions like 'the door keeps on opening' and 'people go on passing' "help in giving the impression of a constant flow, symbolizing, so it seems to me, both the stream of consciousness and the streaming away of human life"(1960:82).

The most used types of time markers are the images of a door opening or shutting and of a drop forming and falling. The first image is seen by all characters, with the exception of Susan, while the second image is mostly seen by Bernard but also by Jinny and Louis.

I shall present two situations in which the first time marker occurs according to each character. First let us compare two passages concerning Jinny: "The door is opening and shutting. People are arriving; they do not speak; they hasten in"(p.68) and "the door goes on opening. The room fills and fills with knowledge,anguish, many kinds of ambition, much indifference, some despair"(p.118). In both passages the door opening and shutting gives the impression of movement, of continuity. The passages also bring within themselves the opposition between the characters' different states and the constancy of the flux symbolized by the door movement. Jinny is, in the first passage, a young woman who can only see the exteriority of things due to the excitement for her first ball. On the second passage, Jinny, as a grown-up woman, is able to realize what is within the people who hasten in. The illusion of movement is the same but the character experiences it

differently due to the accumulation of her past history which makes her present life, each time, completely new.

Let us now take two passages concerning Rhoda. In the first passage Rhoda is at the same ball as Jinny and she is trying to keep unnoticed; "I shall edge behind them, ..., as if I saw someone I know. But I know no one. I shall twitch the curtain and look at the moon. Draughts of oblivion shall quench my agitation. The door opens; the tiger leaps. The door opens; terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me. Let me visit furtively the treasures I have laid apart.... But here the door opens and people come; they come towards me"(p.71). The image of the door is now impregnated by Rhoda's own feelings but, still, it gives the idea of flow. For Rhoda, this continuity only brings terror instead of the joy it brought Jinny in the same situation. Rhoda's view of the flow does not change radically as Jinny's. Later on she would say: "If I could believe, ..., that I should grow old in pursuit and change, I should be rid of my fear:nothing persists. One moment does not lead to another. The door opens and the tiger leaps"(p.87). Here Rhoda, a more experienced person,presents her problem in very clear words. Rhoda is at a restaurant with the other five characters waiting for Percival. This passage explains how the image of the door is associated to that of the tiger for Rhoda. She does not believe in "an indivisible mass"(p.88) called life for she cannot "make one moment merge in the next"(p.87).

Bernard is the character who presents the largest number of passages with the image of the door. In the restaurant, while waiting for Percival, Bernard thinks that "the incessant passage of the traffic chafes us with distractions, and the door opening

perpetually its glass cage solicits us with myriad temptations and offers insults and wounds to our confidence - sitting together here we love each other and believe in our own endurance"(p.83). Bernard is an easily distracted man and, here, the door, besides presenting the realization of the flux, brings 'myriad temptations' to distract Bernard from the love he feels at that moment. The realization of the flux comes as an opposition to the belief in their own endurance. In fact, this opposition can be said to be the battle between the moment and the eternal flux. The characters try to keep the moment untouched but then, when they realize that the flux of life does not stop, the present moment has already gone. (I shall come back to this wish of keeping the moment in the next section.)

Let us now compare the first passage concerning Bernard with another one from the last pages of the book in which Bernard, a "rather elderly man", is talking to a stranger in a bar: "...now that desire urges [the being] no more out and away; now that curiosity no longer dyes it in a thousand colours.... now let the door open, the glass door that is for ever turning on its hinges. Let a woman come, let a young man in evening-dress with a moustache sit down: is there anything that they can tell me? No! I know all that, too"(p.196). Bernard, as well as Jinny, changes completely his view of life and the door, although still bringing novelties, does not distract him anymore, for he is free of curiosity. The accumulation of his experiences has taught him not to be distracted by small things.

Neville is the other character who has several passages in which the image of the door appears and it is always connected

to Percival: "The door opens, the door goes on opening, ... , yet he [Percival] does not come"(p81). This is Neville's voice in the restaurant while waiting for Percival's arrival. The image is repeated four times in two pages to emphasize Neville's anxiety. The next time the friends reassemble Percival is dead but Neville thinks about him using the same image of the door: "The door will open; he will not come"(p.142). The door is linked to Neville's anxious feelings towards the masculine figure symbolized by Percival,but the door is also representing the continuation of the flow, which is not interrupted by a man's death.

As I have already presented there are other time markers in *The Waves* but the image of the door is the most constant one and it can only be compared to the image of the drop .

The word 'drop' appears for the first time on page six. Neville sees "a globe hanging down in a drop", and Bernard sees a spider's web with a 'drop of white light'. However, it is only on page 124 that the image of the drop comes linked to the passage of time. This image is mainly connected to Bernard but Louis and Jinny use it once:

> And time, said Bernard, lets fall its drop. The drop that has formed on the roof of the soul falls. On the roof of my mind time, forming, lets fall its drop. Last week, as I stood shaving, the drop fell....
>
> This drop falling is time tapering to a point. Time, which is a sunny pasture covered with dancing light, time, which is wide-spread as a field at midday, becomes pendant. Time tapers to a point. As a drop falls from a glass heavy with some sediment, time falls. These are true cycles, these are true events. Then as if all the luminosity of the atmosphere were withdrawn I see to the bare bottom. I see what habit covers. (p.124)

This is a very important passage in terms of time in *The Waves*. The word 'drop', repeated seven times, creates the impression of a real drop falling each time one reads the word. Bernard, through the image of the drop, lets the reader see what he himself has realized about time. What is really the drop for Bernard? It is a new stage, a new experience which is always in formation, or in Bergsonian terms, which is successive: "Why should there be an end of stages?"(p.126), asks Bernard. The drop is something always "new and unknown"(p.128). Bernard realizes how fluid life is and how continuous is his own existence. In fact, the drop could be the symbol of the ephemeral moment which is always in formation and falling into the past but which forms a whole with the other drops: "It forms on the roof of my mind and falls into pools beneath"(p151). The image of the drop falling 'from a glass heavy with sediment' is very much Bergsonian in the sense that it shows the drop (or the moment) already impregnated by the sediment (or the past). This image also resembles the symbolic hourglass in which the sand of present things falls into the bottom of our consciousness and at the very moment it falls it is already past (see chap.III). The drop may be "the past gnawing the future and advancing endlessly" (Bergson, 1979:16). Therefore the characters' duration is always something new, different: "Time has given the arrangement another shake" (p.184). The drops will be forever forming and falling in the characters' mind and, thus, life's shape will be perpetually rearranged. This is what Bergson calls "real duration" and it is what V. Woolf managed to show in *The Waves* through these temporal devices.

Another time marker is the one which presents "people

passing". In order to illustrate the greater number of characters who use these time markers I have chosen quotations concerning Louis, for he has not appeared in what concerns these types of time markers.

Louis is at an eating-house observing the movement around him: "People go on passing.... They pass the window of this eating-shop incessantly. Motor-cars, vans, motor-omnibuses; and again motor-omnibuses, vans, motor-cars - they pass the window.... (They go on passing, they go on passing in disorderly procession)"(p.62). From this quotation one can emphasize the ennumeration of vehicles and their repetition in inverted order as one of the devices which creates the effect of the incessant two-way movement of the traffic and which, together with the expression "people passing" repeated three times, produces the effect of movement, the illusion of flux.

One should have in mind that Louis is the businessman and, therefore, he has a tendency to pragmatism and order. For Louis, the flux is a "disorderly procession" because he needs to count or divide it into distinct parts. In other words, Louis cannot cope with the anarchy of the flux of life. For instance, one page later Louis says: "People go on passing; they go on passing against the spires of the church and the plates of ham sandwiches. The streamers of my consciousness waver out and are perpetually torn and distressed by their disorder.... Meanwhile the hats bob up and down; the door perpetually shuts and opens. I am conscious of flux, of disorder; of annihilation and despair. If this is all, this is worthless"(p.63). In this passage, the expression" people passing" is combined with the image of the door

which "shuts and opens" to create the effect of movement. Here, Louis says clearly how he acknowledges and, at the same time, abhorrs the flux, for it is a synonym for disorder and he thinks that the procession of life without order is worthless.

In this third section of the fourth chapter I tried to present in a concise manner everything that indicated the presence of time in *The Waves*, with the exception of memory. The most used devices by V. Woolf were the time references and time markers. The first type of device is mainly represented by the image of clocks which only have a purpose in the imaginary life of the characters and which is literally abolished from the novel in terms of measurer of time. The second type of device is represented by the images of a door opening and shutting, of a drop forming and falling, and of people passing. The image of the door gives the impression of continuity and of time passing, establishing, thus, the contrast between the constancy of the flux and the changeable personality of the characters. The image of the drop is, perhaps, the best examplification of Bergsonian duration which is always in a state of becoming, which is always new and unknown and which is always been rearranged. All these technical devices were used by V. Woolf, and they help to form in the reader's mind the expressive illustration of what could be the Bergsonian flux. However, it is through memory that V. Woolf completes this interesting illusion of duration .

IV.4. The Use of Memory

Memory performs the function of a technical device and supports the temporal pattern of the novel together with the time indicators presented in the previous section. Memory in Virginia Woolf,as I have been trying to demonstrate, is influenced by the Bergsonian concept of real duration and, therefore, always conveys the illusion of indivisible flow and also helps to reveal the characters' main psychological traits because the most recurrent memories are exactly those which best represent the characters.

"Like Bergson, she believes in the indestructibility of the past and its power to re-emerge into consciousness with all its infinite details, in the inseparableness of perception from recollection, and the power of memory to project all human experience in true perspective" (Kumar, 1960:317-8). In other words, memory with its extraordinary power is the main way through which Virginia Woolf displays her characters' duration in this novel as well as in the two previous ones. However, memory in *The Waves* differs from the other two novels due to Mrs. Woolf's choice of dramatic prose. In *The Waves* the characters 'speak' and 'perform' by themselves and so memories are internally associated and developed.

Virginia Woolf shows her reader, through the emphasis on memory, the Bergsonian 'fundamental ego' of her characters. Memory, in Mrs Woolf, achieves the intermingling of past and present; her characters live in pure duration, for they make life a process in the present. The past endures in the Bergsonian sense

implying that the present moment contains within itself a distinct form, the ceaselessly growing image of the past (Bergson, 1974$_c$: 38).

The Waves also differs from the two previous novels because, as J. Graham (1970) says, the moment in this novel is very different from what it was in *Mrs. Dalloway* and in *To the Lighthouse*, "it no longer comes involuntarily or as a result of passive receptivity, it must be created; and it no longer consists in an intuition of a mystical cosmic reality unifying the world of mind and linear time. The world of time-process 'out there' is now something which man must subjugate: he is a creator" (p. 36). Graham's reference to 'creator' comes to emphasize what I have said above; in *The Waves* the characters make life a process of creative evolution as Bergson had theorized. Graham goes on saying that:

> This ardent sense of their power is evoked by their communion, in which they lose the selfhoods imposed on them by time and become, in the image used, 'a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution' (TW, p. 85). Now the experience of creating this single identity lasts only a moment; but the communion created in that moment is eternal. It joins the 'innumerable congregations of past time' in a celebration of the larger body of Man, which exists in an everlasting now. (p. 36)

Virginia Woolf, in *The Waves*, sought through the creative activity of the intellect not only to stay the moment but to expand it into an eternity. This aspiration to stay the moment is also revealed by the abundant use of the word now throughout the novel.

In order to demonstrate my purpose I shall present the most recurrent memories concerning each character and how these

memories reveal the characters' internal life. As a second step I shall present, in terms of memory, how the individualities mix to form the aspired unity in an attempt to stay the moment.

When one thinks of Louis after reading the book the most remarkable characteristics about him are that he is the one who has an Australian accent, whose father is a banker in Brisbane, who dreamt of red pitchers in the Nile, who listened to the chained beast stamping on the shore and who played the role of conspirator together with Rhoda. One can remember other details about Louis as his snake belt, for instance. However, some of the first five characteristics are likely to come to surface at first, for they are the most recurrent ones. The facts related to his accent and to his father's job appear approximately seven times each. We shall analyse these memories to verify if they fit Bergson's definition of pure memory.

Bergson says that "the pure memory records, in the form of memory images, all the events of our daily life as they occur in time; it neglects no detail; it leaves to each fact, to each gesture, its place and date. Regardless of utility or of practical application, it stores up the past by mere necessity of its own nature ... in it we take refuge every time that, in the search for a particular image we remount the slope of our past (Bergson, 1919:92).

If one takes the passages of the red pitchers as an example, one should see that there is a similar atmosphere. Each time the image appears it resembles the first time Louis experienced this vision. Here follows the moment when Louis, a young boy in a nursery school, left alone by the others amidst the

flowers, imagines:

> I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre.... Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans.... (p.8)

The image of the red pitchers will repeat itself in Louis' mind many years later when he is a young man, an average clerk sitting at an eating-shop:

> My roots go down through veins of lead and silver, through damp, marshy places that exhale odours, to a knot made of oak roots bound together in the centre. Sealed and blink, with earth stopping my ears, I have yet heard rumours of wars.... I have seen women carrying red pitchers to the banks of the Nile. I woke in a garden, with a blow on the nape of my neck, a hot kiss, Jinny's; remembering all this as one remembers confused cries and toppling pillars and shafts of red and black in some nocturnal conflagration.(p.64)

The next time the image comes to Louis is at Percival's farewell in a restaurant:-

> Every day I unbury - I dig up. I find relics of myself in the sand that women made thousands of years ago, when I heard songs by the Nile and the chained beast stamping.(p.85-6)

Years later, when Louis, a businessman, is working at his office the image comes once more:

> I have lived thousands of years. I am like a worm that has eaten its way through the wood of a very old oak beam ....the eternal procession, women going with attaché cases down the Strand as they

went once with pitchers to the Nile; (p.112)

There is a reason to make these memories the most recurrent ones. It is due to the fact that they best represent the portrait of the character, or rather, these memories are the stuff of the character himself.

One can see through the examples above that the elements which appear in the first passage are repeated in the others. The image of the women carrying red pitchers to the Nile is closely connected to the elements connected with earth. Louis is rooted on earth as a stalk, he dives into the earth digging up to find out not only about his own past but about the past of humanity; therefore he seems to have lived thousands of years. His dreaming of the Nile, as a boy, persisted throughout his life. The image remains the same as well as the connection to earth but Louis, each time the remembrance comes, is a different person due to the accumulation of new 'relics' of himself found out along his way through life.

The most recurrent aspects concerning Bernard are related to language. He is always "melt with phrases"(p.11) and later he wishes a little language made of words of one syllable. The next most recurrent thing about Bernard is also connected to language; it is the made-up adventure to Elvedor which he partook with Susan (p.11-2).

If one thinks that Bernard is a novelist, then his remembrances about language episodes gain much more importance, because a writer is always concerned with his instrument of work.

One can distinguish, through his memories, two opposite

phases in Bernard's life. The first phase is when he is dealing with language as a means of asserting himself as an individual in the world: "I must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of house-maids, ... or I shall cry"(p.20). And somewhere later Neville observes that Bernard is late for a game "but they would forgive him; for he would tell them a story"(p.33). Through language, in this first phase, Bernard has a kind of power over the people around him; he involves them in some narrative and gets what he needs; he needs to be loved, to be noticed, to be an individual with characteristic traits and that he attains through words.

His second phase comes when Bernard becomes an old man: "I sit here like a convalescent, like a very simple man who knows only words of one syllable"(p.125). He acknowledges the difference between his previous behaviour and the present one but it is only some time later that he actually wishes the change: "I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use"(p.161). At the end of the novel Bernard has acquired this little language; he remembers and describes a vision he had in the following way: "...I walked alone in a new world, never trodden; ... unable to speak save in a child's words of one syllable; without shelter from phrases - I who have so many" (p.194).

These two phases of Bernard's life are conveyed through repeated memories concerning each of them and they help the reader to understand the profound change Bernard has undertaken throughout the novel. Bernard changes from having his life supported by language to wishing to speak as little and as simply as a child does or as lovers do. This is so because Bernard

realized that both child and lovers speak only when necessary, when they cannot express themselves through other means rather than through language which is quite always deceitful.

Neville, in his turn, has a haunting memory which follows him everywhere; it is the remembrance of the "death among the apple trees" which appears six times, with the same intensity, causing horror to him. This image of death appears for the first time already as a memory. Neville,as a young boy, stays alone at the nursery house and decides to recapture something of his recent past:

> I will use this hour of solitude, ... and ... recover, if I can, by standing on the same stair half-way up the landing, what I felt when I heard about the dead man through the swing-door last night.... He was found with his throat cut. The apple-tree leaves became fixed in the sky; the moon glared; I was unable to lift my foot up the stair. He was found in the gutter. His blood gurgled down the gutter. His jowl white as a dead codfish. I shall call this picture, this rigidity, "death among the apple trees" for ever. (p.17-8)

Neville makes the connection between the concrete surroundings and the abstract, almost unintelligible thing he heard of. Thus, death is connected to the apple trees, for the trees were his immediate contact at the moment he heard the story. From that moment on the child found out that even among the most pleasant and innocent things one should be aware, for "we are all doomed, all of us, by the apple trees, by the immitigable tree which we cannot pass"(p.17).

An invitation together with an exclamation is Jinny's most recurrent memory: "O come, I say to this one, rippling gold from head to heels. 'Come', and he comes towards me"(p.70). With

Jinny it could not be otherwise, for it reveals how sensitive, or rather, how sensual she is. It also reveals how intense is her passion for entertainment and for love. Each of Jinny's 'come' is followed by a descriptive passage of her performance in the game of seduction.

As all her sensuality is closely linked to youth, Jinny has some troubles as she becomes aged: "I am no longer young.... I still live. But who will come if I signal?"(p.130). This sad reflection lasts only for a moment, right afterwards she decides to powder her face and redden her lips because she feels that she "still excite[s] eagerness"(p.132). She is resolute not to give up what she likes most. As long as she lives she will be sensuous: "Let the silent army of the dead descend. I march forward"(p.132).

Susan's most recurrent memory is linked to Jinny and Louis, or, more precisely, to their kiss. As soon as Susan,a young girl, sees the kiss she runs with her handkerchief to bury it as a symbol of her fury: "Now I will wrap my agony inside my pocket-handkerchief. It shall be screwed tight into a ball "(p.9). Susan's act of burying what she hates is repeated later on at the girls' school: "I will make images of all things I hate most and bury them in the ground"(p.30).

Another reccurent memory to Susan is also connected to a kiss, this time it is the boot-boy's and the maid's. As a child, coming back from a walk, she sees "Florie in the kitchen garden.... And Ernest kissed her"(p.17). This sight makes Susan look differently at the two servants later at dinner. Susan is impressed by the ordinary way they do the same tasks as if nothing had happened. However, in her child's eyes everything that the

servants touch becomes impregnated with their kiss.

Rhoda's memories are all made up by her own imagination. With her highly creative mind she lives in a world of her own and, thus, her memories refer back to this particular, inner universe. The first and most recurrent memory is related to her childish play, to her white ships made of petals: "All my ships are white.... I do not want red petals of hollyhocks or geranium. I want white petals that float when I tip the basin up. I have a fleet now swimming from shore to shore. I will drop a twig as a raft for a drowning sailor. I will drop a stone in and see bubbles rise from the depths of the sea"(p.12). Rhoda's imagination goes on and on with her narrative till the moment she has to go in for math classes. The remembrances of this moment's play is kept in her mind for ever and it appears seven times throughout the novel.

Her second most reccurent memory is also imaginary. Rhoda is at a ball and feels completely uneasy and in order to feel better she starts daydreaming: "Let me visit furtively the treasures I have laid apart. Pools lie on the other side of the world reflecting marble columns. The swallow dips her wing in dark pools"(p.71). However, Rhoda's dream is interrupted. Somebody calls her to dance and she must go; she, who "longs for marble columns and pools on the other side of the world where the swallow dips her wings" (p.71), must submit.

These individualities, each with his own past and memory, come together in Percival's farewell. In this party, Virginia Woolf makes these six characters merge into one 'flower', to use the image from the book. The novelist intermingles their past through their memories. Most of the recollections, which I

have previously presented as the most recurrent for each character individually, reappear in this party. The six individualities partake their memories and, thus, share their past. They long for unity; they long to stay the present and become, at least for that moment, eternal. In order to achieve this goal they have to abolish time bounds and live in true duration which bears no separation, no time markers. In fact, it is one flow without beginning or ending, or even a direction; it is eternity they aim at.

Bernard, Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny and Rhoda gather at the fourth section of *The Waves* and remain together for twenty five pages (pp.74-99). At first, they are portrayed separately, for they are still arriving and beginning to feel the presence of their friends after some time of absence.

First Bernard, then Neville, Louis, Susan, Rhoda and Jinny appear. As each character enters, another sees him or her and immediately perceives the most remarkable trait about each of them. With Percival's arrival they begin their communion:

> '...sitting together here we love each other and believe in our own endurance,' said Bernard.
> 'Now let us issue from the darkness of solitude;' said Louis.
> 'Now let us say, brutally and directly, what is in our minds,' said Neville. 'Our isolation, our preparation is over.' (p.83)

At this moment, as if the tap of their consciousness had been opened, comes a shower of memories from the six characters. Bernard remembers Mrs Constable and the feeling of the bath sponge she scrubbed on his back; Susan, the boot-boy kissing the scullery-maid; Rhoda, the tiger panting; Neville, the dead man

with his throat cut; and Jinny, the kiss she had given Louis.

It is Louis who, after this first sharing of memories, explains what they had been doing: " 'From these close furled balls of string we draw now every filament,' said Louis, 'remembering when we meet'"(p.84). After this quite Bergsonian image, which V.Woolf had already used before in *To the Lighthouse* (p.130), the characters go on, in a second turn, sharing their memories as they did at the first time; each contributes to draw the most curled filaments of the balls of string of their past.

After this second turn of uncurling their past and of sharing their memories, Bernard sums up: "We have come together, at a particular time, to this particular spot. We are drawn into this communion by some deep, some common emotion. Shall I call it, conveniently, 'love'?" (p.85). Bernard himself answers that love is 'too small a name'. He goes on and asserts that "we have come together... to make one thing, not enduring - for what endures? - but seen by many eyes simultaneously"(p.85). Here, Bernard creates an image, since he is a writer, which perfectly summarizes what is happening to them at that moment: "There is a red carnation in that vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves - a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution" (p.85). After Bernard's lyric explanation the friends go on not only remembering but analysing themselves through the light of their own past, they keep on revealing their souls to each other, as if they were one, and whole, self.

When the moment of departure arrives Louis says: "Do not

move, do not go. Hold it for ever"(p.98). And Jinny also urges:

> 'Let us hold it for one moment, ... ; love, hatred, by whatever name we call it, this globe whose walls are made of Percival, of youth and beauty, and something so deep sunk within us that we shall perhaps never make this moment out of one man again.' (p.98)

Each character, then, expresses what is in this globe and what they say is what there is inside themselves. They have put everything together in this globe and they have become, in this way, a whole.

At the last moment Bernard says:

> 'We are creators. We too have something that will join the innumerable congregations of past time. We too, as we put on our hats and push open the door, stride not into chaos, but into a world that our own force can subjugate and make part of the illumined and everlasting road. '(p.98)

The characters of *The Waves*, as Lily Briscoe in *To The Lighthouse*, are creators and therefore have the power to put order to chaos. Through their unity, they abolish time bounds and create an eternal moment of their own, which cannot ever be repeated, as they cannot repeat any single moment of their duration.

IV.5. Conclusion

In *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf conveys the Bergsonian concept of 'real durée' through the importance given to the interludes, which have the sun and the sea as elements of endless succession establishing the wavy pattern. Through the interludes,

she also presents the Bergsonian idea of the parallel duration of natural things to human consciousness; and this idea is also presented through the juxtaposition between surface and deep temporal levels, which presents the time indicators as technical devices to show how life flows without the use of clocks, and which presents memory as the source for the characters' duration which is portrayed as unique; memory is also the device used to unify the different and personal consciousnesses into one 'globe', or 'flower', which surpasses selfhood and time bounds. The characters manage, through memory and real duration, to become as the waves: ephemeral while alone but eternal while part of a group or society.

CONCLUSION

As I come to these final considerations I hope I have demonstrated, throughout each chapter, what I had previously proposed to show in this dissertation: that there is an affinity between Henri Bergson's theory of duration and Virginia Woolf's treatment of time represented by her attempts to convey, in narrative terms, the idea of the flux of time.

What I have done was an attempt to match the thematic aspect of time, based on Bergson's concepts, and the technical devices (such as narrative structure, symbolism, character portrayal) used by V. Woolf in order to convey it, based on the analysis of three of her novels. I believe I have managed to demonstrate my hypothesis because all the Bergsonian concepts presented in the introductory chapter - consciousness, memory, intuition and duration, are, in different degrees, conveyed by V. Woolf in her novels.

The idea of consciousness as the pressuposition of memory, or as spirit which survives after death, or as creative soul is conveyed, among many other things, by the description of Lily's mind at work in which past and present melt while she is painting; or by Mrs Dalloway's belief in a kind of survival after death as well as by Mrs Ramsay's permanence, after death ,in the minds of the ones who loved her; or by the unification of the six consciousnesses in *The Waves*,with the purpose of creating a unique and eternal moment.

The idea of memory as dynamic storage of the past which

melts with the present and as the apparent trait of consciousness is conveyed, for instance, by the image of 'balls of memory', corresponding to Bergson's image of the 'snowball' symbolizing the accumulation of the kept past, in which the strings which form the ball are shown at the very moment they are unwound; or by the portrait of each of Mrs Woolf's characters because they can only be grasped in their wholeness if one considers their memories at work - this memory, voluntary or not, is always of a deep character enabling the reader to visualize the characters' consciousness in movement in its fluidity.

The idea of intuition as immediate knowledge of the flux, and as a way to achieve aesthetic perception is conveyed by, for example, Mrs Dalloway's sudden and complete realization of one the mysteries of life - that everybody lives in his own unexpressable reality; and by Lily's 'vision' at the end of her work of art which combines many aspects of her visualization of a 'globe' by the six united consciousness, in *The Waves*, in which this globe symbolizes the intuition they have had of their union of selves.

The idea of duration (which is always linked to the concepts of consciousness, memory and intuition) as eternal flux in which nothing is lost, in which past and present are one organic whole, in which everything is in a state of becoming is conveyed, among many other things, by the opposition between the chronological strokes of Big Ben and the fluid images, which seem to avoid every cut made by this artificial type of time along the stream of real duration, or by the temporal pattern of *To the Lighthouse* which resembles an endless hourglass in which past and

present are made of the same stuff and are in a perpetual movement - up and down the slope of consciousness; or by the juxtaposition of the interludes, which encompasses the natural duration, and the sections, which encompasses the characters' duration in the *The Waves* and it is also conveyed in this novel by the images representing time flow such as a door opening and shutting and as a drop forming and falling.

I have chosen to present the novels in their chronological sequence of publication in order to verify whether there was an improvement on V. Woolf's treatment of time concerning fluidity. What I have detected is that there is a drawback and , then, an improvement along the three novels: *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves* present a more fluid temporal pattern than *To the Lighthouse*, while *The Waves* is still more fluid than *Mrs Dalloway*.

Mrs Dalloway, with its very short fictional time (less than 24 hours), and with its small number of main characters (3), presents a fluid pattern which is constantly marked by the strokes of Big Ben; or as Mendilow puts it, "the fictional time, represented by the strokes of Big Ben, leaves its mark ... as impressions. The strokes intercept unequal segments of the characters' duration. The strokes can awake the unconscious to exteriorities or to conventional time. However, the strokes divide the flow in an artificial way, so the flow immediately closes itself upon the cut, as the water closes itself behind a ship's prow"(1972:241).

To the Lighthouse loses some of its fluidity because of the division of the novel into sections and chapters, and because

of its longer fictional time (10 years bridged between two days), and also because of the abundant use of omniscient narration.

The Waves, I think, is the most fluid of the three novels due to the fact that it establishes a juxtaposition between the natural duration and the duration of the consciousness, and, thus, these two durations have a greater freedom to flow each one in its own manner, but in a parallel way. Secondly, the novel presents six characters who are individualized but, at some moments, can also blend their six consciousnesses into one and, thus, it makes the illusion of homogeneity of flux much more real. Thirdly, the use of memory in this novel seems to be more Bergsonian, more involuntarily raised, than in the previous ones. Finally, the wave pattern of the novel established mainly by the interludes creates the strongest effect of the illusion of the endless becoming of a Bergsonian real duration.

At the conclusion I would like to clarify some points. The first point to be made is that this dissertation, not being a philosophical work, has not discussed the metaphysical questions implied in Bergson's theory.

The second point is that the question of time is still a great problem nowadays in many different fields of knowledge. A good example of this is the approach taken by the contemporary physicist Stephen Hawking in his book *A Brief History of Time*. I believe that time problems still exist for the writer and this problem presents itself in the technical level as well as in the thematic level. I think that it would be an interesting thing to verify whether the stream-of-consciousness techniques, in what concerns time treatment, are still in practise by contemporary

writers and if not, one could try to find out what are the devices these writers are using instead in their narratives.

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